"Emmett's Girl," by Seward W. Hopkins, on Page 11.

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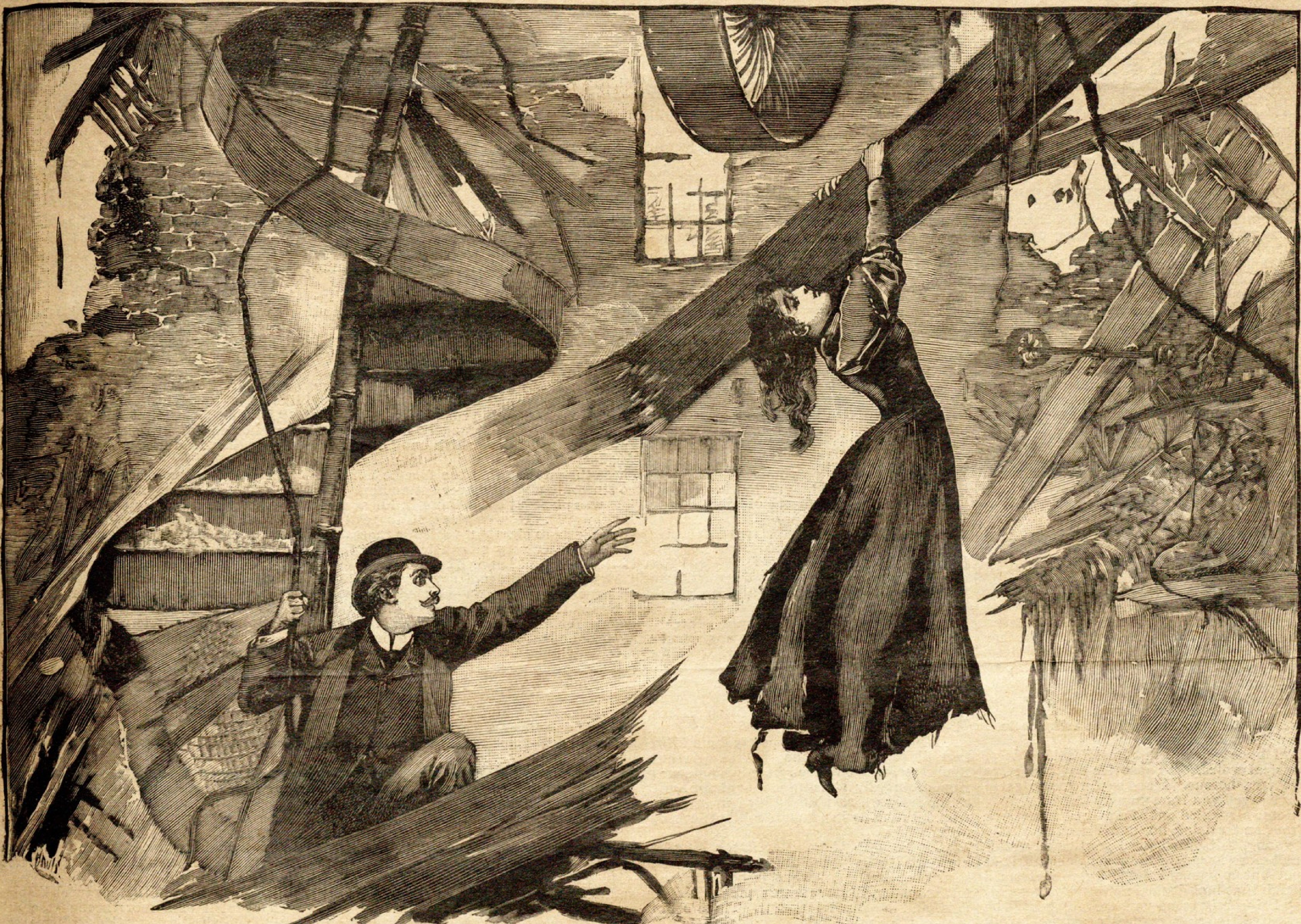

"IONIE!" HE CALLED. "I HAVE COME TO SAVE YOU OR DIE WITH YOU."

IONIE, THE PRIDE OF THE MILL.[*]

A Thrilling Love Story,

Portraying the Life, Romance and Strange Fate of a New York Working-Girl.

BY LAURA JEAN LIBBEY,

Author of "Which Love Proved True?" "Parted at the Altar," "A Mad Betrothal," etc., etc.

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CHAPTER I.

"THE YOUNG MAN RAISED HIS HAT AND TURNED AWAY, LEAVING THE MEMORY OF HIS HANDSOME FACE AND DARK EYES BEHIND HIM."

> To love and be beloved
> Is the one grand dream of a maiden's life.—*F. N. Crouch.*

IT was on the tenth of January, and intensely cold in New York City. I am particular as to the date, for it marked the bitterest tragedy that ever darkened a beautiful young girl's life.

All the night before a thick, steady storm of snowflakes had been coming down, until it seemed on this fatally eventful day that the world lay lost under a shroud of whiteness, and it was snowing still. Great icicles hung from the bare branches of the trees and from the eaves of the houses. A cold north wind was blowing—a wind that chilled everything it touched.

On this bitter cold morning, hurrying along with the crowd that surged up Broadway, was a young girl, who, despite her shabby attire, was rarely beautiful.

She was not more than seventeen, this fair maiden who was destined to meet so strange—aye, so wonderful—a fate, with a face dark and piquant, framed in a wealth of nut-brown curls; dimpled cheeks, which the cutting wind had kissed into twin roses; lips like the heart of a crimson blossom; and these eyes, dark as stars, looking out from the rose-leaf face, would have startled any one with their vivid loveliness. She had the grace of a dainty young princess, though Ionie Lawrence was but a working-girl.

Ionie had been the pride and darling of her father's heart. Six months before our story opens he had passed away, joining the wife of his youth, who had been dead several years, leaving two daughters behind him.

On his death-bed he had called Barbara, his elder daughter, to his bedside, and, drawing her face down to his own cold, clammy one, he whispered, solemnly:

"You are three-and-twenty, Barbara, and Ionie is but seventeen. I leave her to your care. You must be both mother and sister to her, Barbara, she is so young. She is gay, impetuous and willful, but you must be patient with her. She will be more beautiful than it seldom falls to the lot of women to be, Barbara, and great beauty in a young and unprotected girl brings with it either a blessing or a curse. Oh, my dear, I have such strange fears for Ionie's future, I cannot tell why. I trust to Heaven this premonition of coming evil is but a sick man's morbid fancy. I could not rest in my grave if harm befell her. Guard our treasure well, Barbara."

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"I will, father," said the weeping girl. "You may safely leave Ionie to me."

Barbara had kept her promise well. She guarded her treasure too well, perhaps; and that was how she came to lose it.

Barbara Lawrence had taken up the thread of life when her father had laid it down, and sought work in an adjacent mill; but Ionie was kept at school.

Then a sudden change came. Barbara was stricken ill.

The doctor who was summoned saw at once what he dared not tell Ionie—that the end was near; she would soon be alone in this pitiless world.

"Oh, my darling," Barbara had moaned, "what shall we do now? I—I dare not look the future in the face. The money we have laid by will soon be run through with."

"Do not fear, dear," cried beautiful, brave Ionie. "We shall not starve. I can take your place in the mill."

At first Barbara demurred; but there was no help for it. Ionie *must* be bread-winner now by force of necessity; but, ah, how Barbara dreaded it. Her darling knew so little of the great, hard world of men and women. How would it end?

On this eventful morning that our story opens, Barbara had kissed her darling good-bye with a wistful sigh, asking anxiously:

"Are you sure you can find your way to the mill, darling?"

Ionie threw back the brown head running over with curls and looked at her, a gay, rollicking laugh, that sounded like the chiming of silver bells, rippling over the cherry-red lips.

"Don't be a goose, Barbara!" she cried. "Why shouldn't I find my way? One would think, to hear you talk, that I was a child of seven, instead of a young lady of seventeen."

With a hearty kiss and a bear-like hug, Ionie darted away before her sister had time to reply; and Barbara remembered afterward she had watched the girl out of sight.

More than one pair of eyes turned to gaze admiringly after the slim, girlish figure, but Ionie Lawrence paid no heed.

Turning hurriedly off Broadway, and crossing Canal Street, she paused at length before a large brick structure, which bore above the broad entrance door the sign:

ROCHESTER & LELAND.
NOTTINGHAM LACE MILLS.

"This is the place," murmured Ionie, her heart in a flutter, as she nervously ascended the steps that led to the office. "Oh, they will, they *must* take me in Barbara's place, when I tell them she has fallen ill, and that I—"

The sentence never was finished. All in an instant Ionie was conscious of a swift, dizzy sensation; the earth and sky seemed to meet, and then—

"I hope you are not hurt," said a deep, musical voice. "Those ice-covered steps are treacherous. I am so fortunate as to have saved you from an ugly fall."

Ionie struggled out of a pair of masculine arms, and, raising her bewildered eyes, saw a young, tall, fair-haired gentleman standing before her. He and a gentleman friend had but a moment since alighted from a sleigh that had dashed up to the pavement.

"I sincerely trust you are not hurt," he repeated, looking earnestly at the lovely young face flushing and paling in evident embarrassment as she murmured she was "not hurt, only stunned."

"You can go into the office through the private door, if you like. These steps are such a sheet of ice they are actually dangerous."

He could not account for the impulse that led him to add:

"Allow me to introduce myself, and to apologize for the condition of them."

He drew a card from his card-case, and, handing it to her, Ionie read the name—

ARTHUR ROCHESTER.

"Are you, sir, one of the owners of the mill?" asked Ionie, with timid eagerness.

"The son of the senior member of the firm," he replied.

Then her eyes involuntarily travelled toward his companion, and she saw a face that left its memory on her heart while her life lasted—a dark, handsome face that usually won women's hearts at the first glance, a pair of dark, laughing eyes that met her own and seemed to hold her spell-bound by their magic power.

Poor, beautiful Ionie! She might have led a happy enough life if her path had not been crossed by this handsome young man.

Although Arthur Rochester had made himself known to her, he did not offer to introduce his companion, Ionie noticed. On the contrary, he seemed annoyed when he glanced suddenly around and saw that his friend was regarding the girl with apparent admiration.

A frown came over Arthur Rochester's fine face, and, raising his hat, he hurried his companion quickly away.

But not before the darkly splendid eyes had flashed another glance full of unbounded admiration into the lovely, girlish face; for Frank Lyons had promised himself that he should see this pretty young girl again, at whatever cost.

He permitted himself to be hurried away, but a strange smile crept up to the lips the dark, curling mustache shaded. He had left the memory of his handsome face and dark eyes behind him, as he knew he should.

As the gentlemen turned away, Ionie hurried on to the office. Upon making known her errand, she was sent to the foreman, who had charge of those affairs.

A few minutes later, pale as death, she emerged upon the street. She would have sobbed aloud but that so many were passing.

"Father," she cried, below her breath, raising her eyes to the storm-swept sky, "can you understand your poor Ionie's terrible woe? Ah me—ah me! How can I return to Barbara, lying sick unto death this bitter cold winter day, and tell her they refused to take me in her place?

"Can I tell her how I pleaded with them, telling them I must find employment or we would starve? I am too proud to apply to the labor league for aid, while I have health and strength; they expended so much for poor papa during his long illness. Oh, what shall I do? Oh, Heaven help me! What shall I do? Where shall I turn? I shall not go back to Barbara until I have found *some* place."

It so happened that for some little time after Arthur Rochester had entered the mill in company with his friend, it did not occur to him as to the lovely young girl's object in coming there on that bitter cold morning.

"It must be she is in search of work" he argued with himself, gazing thoughtfully into the fire. "Traverse, the foreman, will be sure to send her away," he mused, "for he was speaking only yesterday of the advisability of discharging some of the hands, for work is slack now; but that isn't to be thought of as long as I have a voice in the matter," he ruminated, with a determined shake of the head. "We must manage to find something for them to do, for this is a bitterly hard winter for the poor. I must intercede in this young girl's behalf."

It was for his kindly consideration of their interests that the employees loved him, and more than one recipient of his bounty had cried out from an over-wrought heart:

"God bless Mr. Arthur! He's a noble, true friend to the poor!"

And in proportion as young Arthur Rochester was revered and loved by those about him, his father, the proud old millionaire owner of the mill, was hated.

Hurrying to the office, Arthur Rochester called for the foreman, and found his surmise had been quite correct; the girl had come in search of work, and he found, to his dismay, that she had been already sent away.

A strange regret that he could scarcely have defined thrilled in the young man's heart. The result was, however, an office boy was hurriedly dispatched to overtake the slim figure hurrying down the street, almost lost to sight by the blinding storm, and Ionie was recalled and given her sister's place in the mill.

All that day thoughts of pretty Ionie filled two different masculine hearts. Arthur Rochester, who had been hastily summoned from the city by a telegram, thought of Ionie as the train whirled him on his journey. His friend, Frank Lyons, had thought of nothing else.

"Confound it!" he muttered, reaching for his sealskin overcoat and throwing it on somewhat hastily, "what is coming over me, I wonder. I have seen a pretty, girlish face, and I cannot forget it. There's but one way to cure myself of this mad fancy, and that is to see the same face again;" and he laughed a little, hard, cynical laugh. "I ought not to give one thought to the pretty little gypsy; the fates have forbidden it, that's certain."

All day long the storm had raged on, and night, dark as Hades, had set in early.

At length six o'clock sounded shrilly from the clocks and adjoining belfries, and a few moments later throngs of nimble-footed lassies emerged from the broad entrance-door of the Nottingham Mills to battle with the storm and the darkness as they made their way to the elevated roads and street cars, anxious to get to their homes.

Ionie could not afford the expensive luxury of riding, so she made her way alone on foot. The night was growing colder and colder; the very breath seemed to freeze on poor Ionie's lips, and the snow had drifted to such great depths, and beneath the street was covered with such a glaze of ice, that making one's way was almost impossible.

Suddenly she heard the sound of sleigh-bells, and a few moments later a sleigh dashed up the street; and when it was abreast of Ionie, to her surprise it stopped short. How was she to know that its occupant had purposely followed her from the mill?

Glancing up, she saw by the yellow gleam of the street lamp the dark, handsome face of the stranger whom she had met that morning with Mr. Rochester.

"If you are going my way," he called out, pleasantly, as he raised his hat to her, "won't you let me persuade you to ride? Walking is among the impossibilities. I hope you recognize me; I am your employer's friend."

He had sprung from the sleigh, and was standing, hat in hand, before her knee-deep in the drifting snow.

"I almost envied my friend being of assistance to you this morning," he went on, laughingly. "Fate is kind in placing me in that position now. He did not introduce me to you; he best knows why. Let me introduce myself. I am Frank Lyons, his college chum, from Philadelphia;" adding: "And you are?"

"Ionie Lawrence," the girl answered, timidly, a lovely flush covering her shy, sweet face.

"Do allow me to insist upon taking you home, Miss Lawrence," he pleaded. "You can see for yourself you will never be able to make your way there on foot; you would meet the fate of poor Gretchen; you would be found frozen stiff and cold in death in the snowdrifts to-morrow morning."

Ionie was a little delighted—a little bewildered and just a little frightened. If she could have foreseen the future, she would have turned from him and fled ere the first steps that were to end in so bitter a tragedy were taken.

With girlish, bashful hesitancy, she allowed herself to be persuaded and placed in the sleigh.

He took up the reins, and the mettlesome horse fairly flew over the frozen snowdrifts.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST SECRET SHE HAS EVER KEPT LIES LIKE A DEAD WEIGHT IN IONIE'S HEART.

"Ah, what a fatal web we weave
When first we practice to deceive."

Ionie Lawrence never forgot that sleigh-ride; it was destined to live in her memory for many a long year afterward.

Frank Lyons was a clever man, quick of comprehension; he had the great gift of understanding character, and of adapting himself to the people into whose company he was thrown. He misused the gift terribly, even fatally; but he had it, and used it like a charm.

Although he had exchanged but a few indifferent words with Ionie, he understood her perfectly.

He talked with her of the books she had read, as the sleigh dashed on over the frozen drifts; he quoted sweet, passionate words from the poets; he cited the beautiful love story of Romeo and Juliet as the sweetest he had ever heard, and complimented her by remarking *she* was strangely like the picture of sweet Juliet which hung in the Art Academy, adding that he intended to purchase the picture, that the face he admired so sincerely might be ever before him.

It was pleasant to sit there and hear such kind words. It was pleasant to read the admiration so clearly revealed in those dark eyes. It was very romantic, too, to think that he thought her so like Juliet.

Although he did not say it in words—he was too clever for that—he made Ionie understand that the brightness of life had just begun for him that morning; for, like Romeo, he had seen for the first time a fair face which he should never forget.

Listening to him, Ionie believed him to be the brightest, kindliest, truest man upon earth.

She was very young and inexperienced, or a pair of dark eyes, a dark, curling mustache and a musical voice could not have charmed her so.

The drive home had been of scarcely twenty minutes' duration, but it seemed to Ionie she had lived long ages during that time in another world.

"Ah! here is the number," he said at length, stopping short before her humble home.

He was satisfied with the impression he had made when he saw her start back and exclaim in wonder:

"Have we, indeed, reached my home so soon?"

He helped her to alight with as much courtly grace as though she had been a princess instead of a poor little working-girl, and expressed the hope, very earnestly, that he might see her again some time.

The next instant the slim little figure was lost to sight in the darkness.

"You are late, my darling," said Barbara, as the door opened and Ionie sprang into the room and up to the couch on which the sufferer lay.

As she took her darling in her arms she wondered what had flushed her fair young face with such a new and tender beauty.

"Has it been a hard day, dear?" she asked, as the white arms twined about her, and the dark, curly head nestled down on the pillow beside her own. "It *must* have been," she added, "for it was your first day as a bread-winner, facing the cold, hard world of men and women."

"It was the happiest day of my life, Barbara," she answered. "Every one was so kind to me."

Then she told her how near the foreman had come to not taking her into the mill, but had changed his mind; and of the accident on the slippery steps which would have happened if young Mr. Rochester had not been near at hand.

"God bless Mr. Arthur!" returned Barbara. "He is as noble as he is good—a king among men."

"Did you ever see his friend, Mr.—Mr. Lyons?" stammered Ionie, confusedly. And if Barbara had but glanced at the girl's blushing face, she would have seen a look on it that would have alarmed her at once.

"Yes," answered Barbara, hoarsely, her face darkening strangely. "I—I—have seen him. Why?"

"Do you *like* him?" faltered Ionie, in a low voice.

"No," returned Barbara, slowly.

"Why?" persisted Ionie, the color fading slowly from her pretty, dimpled cheeks.

"I cannot tell you *all* my reasons, but I will say he has a false face. There is cunning in the sharp eyes and cruelty on the thin lips."

"You are prejudiced," said Ionie, drawing back coldly. "I have never heard of any sensible person disliking a man for the color of his eyes or the shape of his lips."

"Nature never makes a mistake in her handwriting," returned Barbara Lawrence, gravely, "and she has written 'Beware' on every lineament of his face."

A gleam of defiance flashed into the dark eyes, and Ionie turned abruptly away, with the word she was about to utter unsaid. How could she tell Barbara—after that—that she had ridden home with him from the mill, and all he had said to her?

"A false face!" Ionie repeated indignantly to herself, as she turned away. Barbara certainly was prejudiced against him. It was the handsomest face she had ever seen, and the remembrance of that one glance from those dark eyes, as they had parted, made her heart beat. It was a break in the monotony of her life—it was something agreeable to think of—the first dawning of that sun that was to shine so brightly for a time—then destroy her.

The first secret Ionie had ever kept was then and there buried down deep in her heart from Barbara's watchful eyes.

If Ionie had not turned silently away, this story would never have been written.

Long and earnestly Barbara thought over that conversation, during the still, solemn hours of the night, as she tossed restlessly on her pillow.

"Shall I tell her the reason I have for hating—yes, *hating* Frank Lyons?" she asked herself, with a bitter, sobbing sigh. "Oh, Heaven! how can I? And yet she should be told the whole truth, no matter how great the shock may be.

"To-morrow I will tell her," murmured Barbara, huskily, "when she returns at night from the mill."

Ionie met the invalid with a strangely flushed face the next morning. The first secret she had ever kept from Barbara lay like a heavy weight in her heart.

"I will tell her that I know him when I come home to-night," she thought, tenderly kissing the pallid face as she bade her good-bye.

It was long after dark when Ionie returned home that evening. A sudden chill seemed to oppress her as she opened the door. The fire in the grate was out—the lamp she had left on the small stand beside the sufferer's couch was not lighted—the room was in total darkness, save for a little strip of moonlight that drifted in.

No welcome voice greeted her. Was Barbara asleep?

Noiselessly she stole up to the couch and knelt down beside it.

"Barbara," she said, softly, "I have something to tell you, dear. It has been weighing on my mind all day long. You won't scold me for not telling you last night, will you, Barbara? Promise me in advance."

The thin, patient face did not turn toward her. The lips that were wont to breathe words of consolation were strangely silent now. No gentle hand was laid caressingly on the curly head; no tender voice answered that faltering appeal. Heaven help her! Barbara Lawrence's voice would answer her never again.

"Do you hear me, Barbara?" she cried, laying her face down beside the one turned from her on the pillow.

What was there in that icy touch that sent such a thrill of horror through the girl's heart? With a low, startled cry, Ionie gazed down into the rigid face lying so still and white within the little strip of white moonlight. The half-open, glazed eyes flashed no look of recognition up into her own.

Then a piercing shriek ran through the lonely room:

"Oh, God! *Barbara is dead!*"

Yes, she was dead, leaving Ionie, her darling, her idol, friendless and alone, to the mercies of the bitter world.

Ionie's wild cries brought in a kind-hearted neighbor, who found her in a deep swoon on the floor.

It was quite a week after Barbara was laid at rest that Ionie opened her eyes to consciousness, and realized with a bitter moan what had happened.

"You nearly went off in brain fever, too, my dear," said Mrs. Gregory, the kind neighbor, to whose house she had been removed.

"I wish I had!" sobbed Ionie. "I have nothing to live for now!"

"It's wicked in the sight of God to think that, let alone saying it," declared Mrs. Gregory. "You have youth and strength, and, no doubt, a long life before you. You are to make the best of it. You must not worry. You can stay here with me until you are able to go back to the mill again."

It was several weeks before Ionie was able to take up the thread of life again; and in the face of another terrible snowstorm she set out, heavy-hearted, for the mill once more.

As she was about to pass through the weaving-room, where a score or more of pretty girls were bending over their looms, toward the cloak-room, to divest herself of her wraps, she was confronted by the foreman, who tapped her insolently on the shoulder.

"Never mind hanging up your wraps, Miss—Miss Lawrence," he said, sharply. "Step up to the desk with me, and we will settle your account. We do not keep young ladies here who stay out from work when it suits their fancy. You are discharged."

"Oh, sir!" she began, "I—"

"No excuses, please," returned the foreman. "I decline to discuss the matter—to listen to another word. You are discharged, I say."

Fairly dazed with pain, Ionie staggered from the weaving-room, with the miserable pittance that had been handed her, out into the street and the terrible snowstorm.

"What shall I do?" she groaned, pressing her hands to her throbbing temples as she raised her eyes to the stormy sky. "Not a dollar left—no home—no money to pay for a day's board. Oh, God of the orphans and the friendless, show me which way to turn!" she moaned, blinding tears falling down her cheeks.

Only those who know what full horror is compassed in the awful word "discharged," and in the dead of winter, can pity poor Ionie. Only those who have had a page of just such an experience in their own past lives can understand what this beautiful, hapless working-girl suffered, and an answering chord will thrill in their hearts for her.

All day long Ionie wandered through the stormy streets, heedless of hunger and cold. At length dusk set in, soon giving place to the darkness of night.

Ionie dreaded returning to Mrs. Gregory and telling her she was out of work, for that lady had impressively hinted she would be pleased to receive as much as she could spare each week, in addition to her board bill, to pay up for the time already spent beneath her roof during her illness.

"Ah! how can I return there?" moaned Ionie, threading her way with the busy throng that surged up Broadway.

She found herself at last upon Lexington Avenue, and just as she made that discovery, a gentleman passed her, directly beneath the glaring light of the gas-lamp.

Although he did not glance in her direction and his seal overcoat was fastened close up about the chin, she recognized him at once as young Mr. Rochester.

If she could but plead with him to take her back, telling him *why* she remained away from the mill that ten days, perhaps he would grant her request.

Acting upon the impulse, Ionie sprang forward, but she was not quick enough. At that moment Arthur Rochester had run lightly up the broad marble steps of an adjacent mansion, and had admitted himself with his pass-key.

Ionie stood silent and motionless before the house, her hands clasped in despair, her lovely eyes drowned in tears.

There seemed to be something going on inside, for the house was lighted from "garret to basement;" and while she stood there coaches commenced to arrive and deposit their fair burdens at the canopy-covered door.

"Oh, if I could only see him but for one little moment!" thought Ionie, catching her breath with a bitter sob. In cases like this even the most timid are driven by necessity to desperate measures.

She hurriedly ascended the steps and touched the bell.

The liveried footman gazed in undisguised amazement at the shivering, ill-clad, slim figure standing before him.

"What are you doing here? What do you want? Why didn't you go below to the servants' hall?" he asked, all in a breath.

"I wanted to see Mr. Arthur Rochester for but a few minutes," pleaded Ionie, earnestly. "I saw him enter just now. I *must* see him."

"*Must!*" he repeated sneeringly. "That's pretty good. You *can't* see him. Come, move on, my pretty."

"Who is it wants to see Mr. Arthur, Peters?" asked a curious voice from within.

Peters, the footman, drew back, with a low, obsequious bow.

"Only a working-girl from the mill, I should imagine, Miss Elaine—a mere nobody. I've told her it is simply impossible; she couldn't see Mr. Rochester."

"He would see me if he only knew my errand," sobbed Ionie.

The young girl whom Peters had called Elaine came swiftly forward, and then Ionie saw the most magnificent being she had ever beheld. A slim, *petite* young girl, with dark eyes and hair, robed in a fleecy white ball dress. Diamonds encircled her white throat, flashed from her arms and small, white hands, swung from the tiny shell-like ears, and caught back the meshes of her jetty coil.

"Why do you wish to see Mr. Rochester so particularly?" she asked, peering eagerly down into the white upturned face, which she saw at a glance was as beautiful as a poet's dream.

"I—I could hardly tell *you*," murmured Ionie, choking back a sob.

The heart of the little heiress, who loved Arthur Rochester with a mad, passionate love, was fired with bitter jealousy at once, and she made up her mind that this lovely working-girl should never see him, if she could prevent it.

CHAPTER III.

"CAN YOU HEAR ME, DARLING?" HER LOVER SHOUTED. "I WILL SAVE YOU, OR DIE WITH YOU!"

Oh, what was love made for if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
Through the furnace unshrinking thy steps I'll pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee, or perish there, too.—*Moore.*

"Who are you?" demanded the heiress, watching the lovely young face keenly.

"I am Ionie Lawrence," answered the girl, her lips trembling.

"You cannot see him to-night, that's certain," said Miss Elaine Granger, icily. "You should remember a gentleman's residence is not the place to call on business matters—that is, if it *is* a business matter you wish to consult him about. He has an office for that purpose, where you can find him usually during the day."

The heiress turned haughtily away, and Ionie found the door closed summarily in her face.

There had been an amazed listener to this dialogue; no less a personage than Arthur Rochester himself. He was coming down the broad stairway, his footfalls making no sound on the thick velvet carpet.

Peters fell back in dismay when he saw his young master.

"You were to take your orders from *me* when visitors called for me as to whether you were to admit them or send them away!" he said, sternly. "Open that door."

"Do you wish me to recall the person, sir?" asked Peters, abashed.

"I will do so myself," said Arthur.

"You forget, Arthur, that you are needed here to help receive our guests," cried the heiress, angrily. "What is this girl to you that you would follow her out in the storm? Is she some presumptuous flame?" she added, with a keen touch of spitefulness.

The blood receded from Arthur's fine, aristocratic face.

"Elaine—Miss Granger!" he cried, "you forget yourself!"

"It is you who forget yourself!" she retorted, with blazing eyes, "encouraging such creatures as that to come here to call for you, and disgrace the house!"

Arthur Rochester gazed at the indignant, wrathful beauty in grieved amazement too deep for words; and in that one moment all brotherly liking he had for Elaine Granger died out of his heart.

"Stop!" he said, with stern reproof in his voice. "That young girl, although she works for a livelihood, is as noble a young girl as ever lived. God forbid that any one shall deem it a disgrace that she should enter this house!"

"That's right," sneered the beauty. "Champion the cause of the working girls."

"I will, just as long as I live," replied Arthur. "My respect for those honorable young ladies who earn their bread by honest work is profound; it is a proof, to every sensible man, that they are pure and true."

Like a flash he was gone, leaving the heiress fairly quivering with rage and terrible jealousy.

He quickly overtook the slim figure, and soon learned the cause of Ionie's woe.

"You *shall* return to the mill to-morrow," he said. "I will be there in the morning myself. I will soon settle the matter. I missed you during your absence. I thought you had left the mill on your own account, Miss Lawrence."

He did not add how greatly he had missed her—that night and day he had been haunted by her pure, sweet face—and that he had found himself continually wondering if they should ever meet again.

No one can picture, indeed, how great was poor Ionie's joy at the prospect of being reinstated in the mill. She thanked him in a voice choked with tears.

"It is not a seasonable hour for a young lady to be out alone, unattended," he said. "You will permit me to place you in a coupé, and send you safe home."

Ionie demurred; but firmly and gently he overruled her objection. He was too truly a gentleman of honor to take advantage of the situation and ride home with her.

He raised his hat with a grave, courteous bow as the coupé rolled away, and turned his face homeward. The heart in his bosom was beating strangely, and there was a tender light in his bonny blue eyes.

That evening he moved about among the guests with a happy smile upon his lips. Pretty girls watched him with yearning eyes; coquettish belles did their best to flirt with the handsome young heir: but even while he talked with them, he was thinking of Ionie, and how superior she was to these gilded butterflies of fashion.

A month passed by. Ah me! how much can happen in a month!

During that time, watching her from afar, Arthur Rochester learned to love Ionie Lawrence with all the true, manly affection of his noble heart. Never was there such a bashful lover, though he loved so deeply; for never, by a word or look, had he betrayed the true state of his heart. He waited for an opportunity to tell of his love, (forgetting that a bold wooer would have *made* his opportunity,) and to ask her to share his heart and home.

Frank Lyons, his college chum, still lingered in the metropolis, and Arthur never once dreamed what the attraction was that kept him here.

During that month, Frank Lyons had managed to meet Ionie often, always by accident apparently, never by appointment, and to see her home from the mill. Is it to be wondered, with no one to warn her, that her lonely, girlish heart drifted out to him? Once Mrs. Gregory had met them together.

"Take care! Beware, Ionie!" she had said that night. "The man you were walking with is as handsome as a prince, but I do not quite like him. He's one of those fine, smooth-tongued aristocrats. I saw a big diamond sparkling in his bosom and another on his hand, white as a lady's. He must be very wealthy. Take a word of advice from a woman who has seen a good deal of life. 'Eagles don't mate with sparrows,' or, in other words, these wealthy young fellows don't often choose working-girls for wives—more's the pity. And there's another old adage which it does no harm to remind young girls of, and that is: Never listen to words of love from a young man unless he speaks of marriage in the same breath."

"But," argued Ionie, with a beautiful little blush, "a young gentleman is not going to speak about love or marriage until he knows a lady some little time, and finds out whether he really likes her or not, I should fancy."

"Be sure and not let your heart go out to him until you know his intentions, then," said Mrs. Gregory.

But the heart in question had already gone out of Ionie's keeping, with a love so great it frightened even herself; a love that ends in a tragedy when the heart's idol is shattered and the love-dream broken.

At the end of that month a thrilling event happened.

There had been important alterations of the left wall of the factory going on for a few days past, and for that reason the girls had been transferred to the fourth floor of the building, among them Ionie.

It was noon, and for a brief hour the vast building seemed almost deserted save for the few bookkeepers in the main office, and two or three girls up on the upper floor, who had brought their lunch in preference to patronizing the little restaurant around the corner.

Ionie sat apart from her companions, having finished her scanty repast, her curly head bent low over a book which she would not have cared to have the girls see. It was a book on etiquette.

Poor child! She was eagerly studying the rules that regulated the deportment of the rich and grand young ladies in whose society Frank Lyons must move.

Suddenly there was a low, hoarse rumbling like the sound of distant thunder. But Ionie was so deeply engrossed in her book she did not hear.

"It's an earthquake!" cried one.

"No, no; the new wall is caving in!" cried another. And, too terrified to even scream, they fairly flew down the nearest stairway to the street.

There was another dull rumbling, followed by a terrific crash, that brought out all of the bookkeepers, pale as death, to the pavement, but not an instant too soon. The stone wall fell in like the report of a hundred cannon, carrying the greater portion of the roof with it, and crashing down, down like a mighty cyclone, carrying all the floors and heavy machinery with it as it went.

"Thank God the building is empty," cried a dozen voices, "or there would have been a horrible holocaust here!"

Was the building empty?

As if in answer, they heard a wild scream, and some one pointed upward. Simultaneously the vast throng assembled below raised their eyes, and beheld the figure of a young girl clinging to the shaking timbers on the topmost floor.

Terror and despair were written upon every feature of the beautiful, childish face turned toward them.

They saw her lips move, and they knew it was a wild, agonizing prayer for help, although the noise of the falling stone drowned her piteous voice.

She was so young, so fair, to die! Could nothing be done to save her? was the cry on every lip.

Yet there was not one who dared brave death in that falling structure, and the vast crowd stood by as if petrified, unable to act or move.

Besides, they saw, to their horror, one of the great wheels of the machinery, just above her head, revolving with lightning-like rapidity, and which must soon give way. No power, save the hand of God, could keep it from falling upon her and crushing her before their very eyes.

Even the spiral iron stairway—the only means of reaching the poor girl—swayed to and fro on its fastenings, awaiting but another avalanche of stones to send it whirling down with the rest of the wreck. No man dared trust his weight upon it; and then the wheel—to be in its path one moment more would mean certain death.

The crowd below saw this, and realized it. Strong men turned away, with hoarse, shuddering cries. Women fainted outright, their bitter cries mingling with the hoarse rumble that shook again through the doomed wall.

Looking down at the surging mass of horrified faces, Ionie saw but one—the face of Frank Lyons, her lover—and to him, in that vital moment of life or death, she looked for help. But he shrank back.

"No, no!" he panted hoarsely to himself. "I could never risk my life to save hers. It is not to be thought of."

"Back! Give me room!" cried a clarion voice in the crowd.

A young man who had just appeared on the scene took in the situation at a glance.

"Back!" he commanded, in a voice like a bugle blast; and the crowd parted.

In a flash he had sprung up the swaying spiral stairway to the girl's rescue.

"Oh, God!" was the cry of a hundred voices in the crowd. "It is Mr. Arthur Rochester!"

"Come back! Come back!" they cried in terror. "It means death! Better one should die than two!"

But he heeded them not. Up, up the swaying stairs he sprang; his face blanched when he saw the horrible wheel, but he pushed onward.

"Ionie!" he called. "My poor girl, can you hear me and understand? I have come to save you or die with you!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 13.]

THE DARK STRANGER.[*]

BY JOHN R. MUSICK,

Author of "Mysterious Mr. Howard."

["THE DARK STRANGER" was commenced in No. 3. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE VOYAGE.

MR. AMBROSE FLETCHER was in a state of anxiety bordering on to distraction. He had called three times to see Miss Hallie Tyler to ascertain what action she would take on the indubitable proof he had furnished her that her father lived, and every time she was absent. He began at last to entertain a strong suspicion that she was purposely avoiding him. He wrote a note to her asking for an interview, but received no answer. In this state of anxiety he went to the office of one of those private detective associations where a man can be employed to do any sort of work, and engaged a detective to shadow the Weathergate mansion.

"I want you to keep an eye on a young lady who lives there, named Hallie Tyler," explained Fletcher.

"A shoplifter?"

"No, no!"

"Stolen diamonds?"

"No, she is not a thief. She must not be arrested. I believe she is going away, and I want to know when she goes and where."

"Yes, yes, I perceive," the detective answered, with a smile. "It is an affair of the heart?"

"Yes."

"Do you fear she will elope with a rival?"

"No. I fear she is going to the West Indies or Central America."

"What shall I do if I learn she is going?"

"Come at once and tell me. Watch her every movement and report it to me, but do not let her know that she is being shadowed."

"I'll do it," the detective answered. "She will not suspect that I am more than a peddler of needles and pins, an organ-grinder, or something of that sort."

On the second day the detective was engaged on his work he reported:

"The young lady visits the Conservatory of Music and the Hendricks mansion on Fifth Avenue."

Ambrose felt elated.

"She can't get the money from any one save myself," he thought.

The dark scheme of Ambrose Fletcher was one that ought to have made a demon blush. It was far deeper than lover ever planned. He had love, wounded pride, hate and avarice all to gratify.

But so secretly did Hallie go about perfecting her plans that he was kept in profound ignorance of them. One day, as she was coming from the house of Mrs. Hendricks, she heard some one at her side call her name, and turning her head, saw Mr. Henry Cline, the young gentleman for whom her cousin Celia had been sighing. She gave him a quick, anxious gaze, and said:

"You must not be seen with me, Mr. Cline."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Cousin Celia is very jealous."

"Why, Miss Hallie, I have been trying to assure you for weeks that Celia Weathergate is nothing to me. She is an estimable young lady. I admire her, and all that. But she is no more, and can be no more, than a friend."

"She believes otherwise."

"I have never given her cause, Miss Tyler. Hallie, you are the one being, and the only one, I can ever love. Will you—"

"Hush, Mr. Cline! I cannot listen to you. Really, I cannot," she interrupted.

"Won't you give me some hope—just a little?"

"I cannot."

"Never?"

"Never," she answered, earnestly. He walked for a moment by her side, his sad, dark eyes on the pavement. At last he asked:

"Hallie, can't we be friends?"

"Yes, Mr. Cline, the dearest of friends—but no more."

"Thank Heaven! You will not drive me away from you?"

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"I should be ungrateful not to appreciate your kindness, Mr. Cline, but I cannot become your wife. I am going away, and perhaps it would be better if we never saw each other again."

"Where are you going?" he asked in astonishment.

"To search for my father."

"He is dead."

"No, he lives."

"Where?"

"In Nicaragua." Then she told him that she had been informed, in a most mysterious manner, that her father lived; and she was going to ransom him.

"Let me go with you. Let me share the hardships and dangers of the journey."

"No, Mr. Cline; I must go alone, and alone endure the hardships and dangers, if there are any."

"But you will need funds; let me—"

"Thank you, Mr. Cline, I have sufficient money to answer all purposes."

He was silent for another short time, walking with his head bowed in deep thought.

"Why are you so cruel?" he at last asked. "Do you so utterly despise me that you refuse every offer of friendship I make?"

"It is not because I do not appreciate your kind offers, Mr Cline, but because I have no need of them. Besides, it would be better for yourself as well as for myself that we never saw each other again."

"Hallie, this is cruel!"

"But it is kind. Adieu!"

"Let me accompany you to the house?"

"It would be better if you did not."

"Why?"

"It would confirm the jealous but groundless suspicions of my cousin, and make my life less endurable."

He paused short. The secret had at last got to his dull but honest brain. She was dependent on her relatives, and perhaps they were sending her away to get rid of her.

"Hallie, answer one question: Is your Aunt Hannah sending you away?"

"No."

"Does she furnish the money?"

"No."

He heaved a sigh of relief, grasped her hand and, raising it to his lips, murmured "Good-bye!" and was gone. When she glanced at the hand he had kissed, a teardrop glistened on the back of it. She appreciated that as a treasure, and another tear rolled from her cheek to keep it company.

* * * * * * *

One morning Mr. Ambrose Fletcher was awakened by some one pounding furiously on his door.

"Who is there?" he demanded, starting from his bed.

"It is I," answered the voice of his detective. "I have something to report."

"What have you discovered?" he asked, as half-dressed he appeared at the door.

"She is gone."

"The girl?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Sailed last night in the *White Star* for Nicaragua."

Fletcher gave vent to an expression of rage, and began to dress.

"Gone alone! Spurned my aid!" he cried. Turning to the detective, he asked: "When does another ship sail for Nicaragua?"

"Within a week."

"Do you know the day?"

"No."

"Ascertain, and let me know within an hour."

The detective was anxious to beat a retreat, for he read in the face of his employer a coming storm. He was correct in his conjectures, for even as he hurried below, there came from Fletcher's room a tempest of invectives and ejaculations, highly tinctured with brimstone and calculated to make the hair of a Christian man stand on end.

* * * * * *

Hallie had sailed at last for the mysterious land in which she expected to find her father. It was winter, and but few passengers cared to be on deck when the vessel cast off.

It was the middle of the afternoon when the private carriage of Mrs. Hendricks, containing herself, children and young friend, rolled down to the dock. It was one of those heavy, dark, dreary days of midwinter when the chilling rain falls and fogs rise in New York harbor.

Hallie kissed her friends adieu; Mrs. Hendricks shed a few genuine tears, and hoped she would be back safe, and Hallie went on board. All was bustle and confusion. The pier was crowded with carriages and men; passengers were arriving and hurrying on board; the vessel's deck was encumbered with the usual amount of trunks and valises and rifles, as if a great hunting party was just starting out. The fact was, many of the passengers were adventurers, going to California to make their fortune, or to Nicaragua to join Walker's expedition. The plans of the filibuster were well known all over the United States, and hundreds of men, seeing only the rosy side of the picture, hastened to join him. From Maine to California, Walker's name was in everybody's mouth.

Groups of people, arrayed in unattractive travelling costume, were moping about in the cold, drizzling rain, and looking as drooping and woebegone as a brood of chickens just weaned. Even the gallant flag at the masthead was under the spell, and hung limp and disheartened against the mast.

Hallie, with her waterproof pulled up about her ears, her umbrella over her head, stood on the deck for a single moment waving her hand to her benefactress, who sat weeping in her cab. Finally, above the crashing of falling baggage, rumbling trucks and shouting and hissing steam, rang the order to "cast off!"

A sailor ran from deck to deck, ringing a bell and shouting to all not booked for the voyage to go ashore, which caused a scampering of visitors. The ponderous cable was cast off, the great wheels began to revolve, and the steamer backed out from her pier, steamed down to the entrance of the harbor, and came to anchor. It was still raining. Not only raining, but storming, and when poor, frightened Hallie gazed out to sea, she discovered the waves rolling to such tremendous height that it seemed dangerous to venture among those wild, tumbling waters. They had to lay in the harbor until midnight before the storm abated.

Hallie had never been to sea before, and felt that she was alone, with no one to whisper a word of cheer or encouragement to her on that strange, mysterious voyage. Often had she gazed out upon the harbor, where the seaweed floated on the wide bosom of the ocean, and wished she could visit the far-off shores touched by those waters. But that wish was only when the ocean was at peace. Now it was angry, and she shuddered as the darkness closed about them, and the last objects she saw were the wild, tossing whitecaps beyond. At last, wearied with falling rain and roaring storm without and the mingling tongues of passengers within, she retired to her stateroom and fell asleep.

A little after midnight she was awakened by the motion of the ship. She heard the puffing of the engine, the plunging of the prow as it dashed into the whitecaps and split them asunder. They were under way. The storm had abated, but the sea was still rolling heavily. On, on, and on the gallant ship held her course, and when daylight came the vessel was far out to sea, tossed on the foam-crested waves.

Hallie heard the call for breakfast, and made an effort to rise; but she felt a peculiar pain in the center of her forehead, and grew so dizzy and sick when she attempted to leave her berth that she gave it up and lay down again. For three days she was unable to leave her stateroom, afflicted with the most disagreeable of all complaints to travellers, seasickness. At the end of that time the weather became fair, the sea more smooth, and the lonely little traveller ventured into the main cabin. Other passengers who had been sick by this time began to creep to the main cabin or the deck, and a more disconsolate set one never saw.

At last Greytown, Nicaragua, was reached, and as the *White Star* sailed into the harbor Hallie stood on the deck gazing at the far-off shore and receding hills and mountains, covered with verdure to their very summit, and asked herself:

"Is father there? Will I find both Claude and father? Oh, Heaven grant that I may!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE DARK STRANGER AT GREYTOWN.

"Are you going to California?" some one at Hallie's side asked. Turning, she beheld a middle-aged man whom she had noticed observing her several times during the voyage.

"No, sir," she answered.

"Have you ever been in Nicaragua before?"

"No, sir; I have not."

"It is a disagreeable place just now."

"Why?"

"The people are on the eve of a revolution."

"Where did you learn that?" she asked.

"At San Domingo. General Walker, it seems, is in trouble. They say they have him besieged at Granada, and he will have all he can do to get out of the place."

She was not interested in Walker or the pending revolution. What were they to her? Her mind reverted at once to her father and her lover. She had last heard of Claude sick, and perhaps dying, at this place. As her vision reached the great forests and mountain peaks in the distance, she wondered whether she could not see the tops of the mountains among which her father was at that moment held a prisoner. At last she turned upon the middle-aged gentleman, and asked:

"Do you live in Greytown?"

"No, Miss."

"Have you been there?"

"Frequently."

"Then you have acquaintances there?"

"Some."

"Do you know Monsieur Le Clerc, who used to live in Martinique?"

He reflected a moment, and answered:

"No."

"Did you ever hear of such a person?"

He shook his head, and said:

"I don't believe any such person was ever in Greytown."

She heaved a sigh and walked to another part of the deck. The vessel cast anchor, and, after considerable delay, she got ashore. On inquiry, she ascertained there was a tavern in the town kept by an American widow, who had lost her husband by the ravages of some of those epidemics prevalent in the country. The prospect of the great interoceanic steamship canal across Nicaragua had given such an impetus to business at Greytown that, up to the time of the war with Walker, the prospects of the place were golden. The widow, who had an eye to business, established her hotel at the right time and place to make a small fortune, and but for the disastrous attempt of Walker would, no doubt, have become rich.

After a day or two of rest, Hallie began to make inquiry for Le Clerc. The landlady was the first person interrogated.

"Do you know a French gentleman from Martinique named Le Clerc?" she asked.

Turning her surprised eyes upon her, the widow answered:

"N-No. I don't believe I ever heard of him."

"He has been in Greytown."

"I think not. If he had ever been here I would have known him."

Hallie felt her hope and courage rapidly deserting her. Perhaps, after all, the letters were false. She was not sufficiently familiar with Le Clerc's chirography to be certain that the letters purporting to come from him were in his handwriting or not. When alone in her room that night, she fell upon her knees, and, weeping, prayed.

"Oh, God! help me to solve this mystery! Help me to do what is right, and guide and direct me in this search after loved ones!"

Next morning she asked he landlady if she had ever known two persons calling themselves Tom Coleman and I. S. K. Perkins. The widow's brow gathered into a mass of knots and wrinkles, and after a few moments' taxing her memory, she said:

"It does seem to me that I did hear of two such persons. Didn't they go to California?"

"Perhaps."

"I think they did."

"Did Perkins come back?"

"I don't know."

"Wasn't he sick in this town?"

"No; I don't think he was. At least he could not have been very sick without my knowing it."

"Did he die?" she asked, in a faltering voice.

"No; he never died. No one could die in this town, especially an American, without my knowing it."

Hallie felt some relief, yet she discovered that she was far from finding her loved ones. She began a cautious, then a bold inquiry for the persons whom she wished to see. The Americans resident in the town, and even the British Consul, were visited and interrogated in regard to the dark stranger, but all to no purpose.

One afternoon, as she was wandering about the plaza, listening to the noisy prattle of naked children and the squealing of pigs, she was accosted by a small man with keen, black eyes and dark hair. His face was very swarthy and his features sharp. He tipped his broad-brimmed sombrero, and spoke in tolerably fair English.

"I beg ze pardon of ze senorita and want to speak wiz her."

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am honest Miguel, ze muleteer who goes over the mountain."

"Do you know me?" she asked.

"*Si*, senorita. I have heard very much talk about you."

"What do you wish of me?" she asked.

"Ze senorita came in ze *White Star* from America?"

"Yes."

"Does ze senorita want to see some one?"

"I do."

"Be very circumspect and quiet, and ze senorita can be accommodated."

"What do you mean?" Hallie asked, gazing at honest Miguel, who stood shrugging his small shoulders and blinking his little black eyes in a very peculiar manner. After taking a cautious survey about them to see that they were not in earshot of others, the little fellow answered:

"Ze senorita must not start and be astound when I tell her I know who she is and what motif brought her to Nicaragua. I know ze senorita is Hallie Tyler, and she come to find her fazer, who be in prison mit ze Sambos."

Hallie suddenly became excited, and, seizing the little fellow's arm, cried:

"Do you know where Monsieur Le Clerc is?"

"*Si*, senorita," he answered.

"Where? Take me to him at once."

The little fellow shrugged his shoulders, twirled his little black mustache, and after another careful glance about him, answered:

"Ze senorita is too much in great hurry and excitement."

"Why need we delay when my poor father is a prisoner? Heaven have mercy on me if I delay one moment!"

The little fellow winced impatiently, and answered:

"If ze senorita will meet Miguel at zis palm when ze moon first rise to-night, he will take her to ze Senor Le Clerc. He be in ze town at zat time in ze night."

"Is he in town now?"

The little fellow shook his head and looked mysterious.

"Where is he?" she asked.

After another shrug of his shoulders, the little fellow informed her he would return at the hour designated.

"I will come!" she declared. Miguel, the honest muleteer, cautioned her to come alone, and say nothing of her intended interview. "Why all this precaution?" she asked.

"Ze big revolution come, and ze senor see not many men now. Senorita must come alone by herself;" and Miguel bowed with Spanish politeness and withdrew.

"At last," thought Hallie, as she walked with a nervous step toward the hotel, "I am about to test the reality of those stories and heartaches of years. Oh, God, give me the strength to endure the suspense and torture!"

As she had been cautioned to keep her intended visit a secret, she said nothing about it to any one. If Hallie entertained any suspicions of danger, they were suppressed, in the hope of soon meeting her father. Perhaps she would also learn something of her lover. She was resolved, as soon as she had rescued her father, to continue the search for Claude.

"Both must be saved," she mentally declared.

The day passed slowly to the anxious girl. She sought to amuse herself with a few books she had brought and a stray copy of the New York *Herald* which had reached the town in some way. Although it was several weeks old, she would have found something in it of interest had she been in any mental condition to read.

At last evening came. There were some Americans at the tavern, who were discussing the distracted state of the country and the dangers to which the Walker government was exposed. The elderly gentleman who had shown so much interest in her during the voyage was among them. When the sun had set and the tints of silver in the east proclaimed the rising of the moon, she started for the rendezvous. She had not gone a dozen rods, when she heard the tread of footsteps behind her, and, looking back, saw the middle-aged gentleman following her.

"I beg pardon, young lady, but I hope you are not going to venture out alone?"

"I am not going far," she answered, while she trembled in every limb.

"Do you appreciate the dangers to which you are exposed?"

"Yes, sir."

"And go alone?"

"I prefer to do so, thank you."

The American gentleman paused, and looking into her pretty face, said:

"Young woman, pardon the interest I have taken in you. I have a daughter at home about your age, and when I see you alone and friendless I cannot but think of her. Perhaps you have no father to watch over you? If I have seemed meddlesome, pardon me, and consider me your friend if you need one in this country."

She bowed her head and blushed for shame at so long slighting the gentleman's proffered kindness. At last she took both his hands in her own, and, with tears in her eyes, answered:

"Pardon me, sir, if I seemed rude and mysterious in rejecting your proffers of friendship. I appreciate your kind offers; but my mission to this country is a secret one. I dare not take any one into that secret. There is danger, I am fully aware, but I am determined to brave those dangers. If all enterprises were abandoned because they were dangerous, but few would ever come to a successful termination."

"You are correct, my brave little girl; you are correct. Go ahead in your enterprise, which I know from your face must be a righteous one, and may God bless you. If ever you need a friend, just call on Rufus King." And the elderly gentleman handed her his card.

She took it, bade him adieu, and hastened toward the palm-tree which stood in the outskirts of the village. The moon had just risen over headland and bay, and was throwing the first beam of its light on the scene when she reached the place agreed upon.

"He has not come," she murmured in a whisper. But she was mistaken. At this moment there arose from the old ruined stone wall the form of a small, dark-eyed man. He had a broad-brimmed sombrero on his head, a doublet and sash met by a pair of slashed trousers. In his belt were a brace of naked pistols and an ugly-looking *machete*.

"Senorita is come on ze time," he remarked, with a smile on his thin, swarthy features.

"Is Monsieur Le Clerc in the town?"

"*Si*, senorita, he is near to it."

"I wish you would take me to him at once."

"The senorita follow Miguel, ze honest muleteer, and she will see for herzelf."

Every movement of the honest muleteer was made with great caution. He spoke in tones so low that one could not have heard him a dozen paces away. His keen black eyes flashed on every side, and saw that no one was in the way. Then he led her through a gap in the broken wall and down a narrow path until the village was lost to sight by a dense grove of orange and mangroves. Hallie began to entertain just the least fear that the honest Miguel might, after all his pretenses to honesty, be a scoundrel, when they came to one of those thatched palmetto shanties so frequently met with in Central America. As her guide paused before it, she asked:

"Is he in there?"

He nodded, and opening a small door, bade her enter. She did so, and found herself in a small apartment. A single tallow dip candle was burning on a small stand table, which but dimly lighted the room. A tall, dark man who had been lying in a hammock rose to a sitting position, and in quite familiar tones said:

"Welcome, Mademoiselle Tyler, of New York, welcome to Greytown!"

She was again face to face with that mysterious, dark stranger by whose advice had come to Nicaragua. Her heart beat rapidly; she essayed to speak, but faltered. Would she now learn the truth? she thought. Was her father still living, or was he dead? Unable to utter a sound at first, she sank helpless upon a stool and pressed her hands to her throbbing brow.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAINS—THE ROBBERS.

Le Clerc had lost none of his politeness. He saw that his visitor was overcome by her emotions, and hastened to pour a glass of wine for her.

"Drink this, mademoiselle, and it will give you strength. You have travelled a long distance and are faint."

After sipping the wine she murmured:

"I am better now."

"Will not the mademoiselle recline on the hammock? She's very tired."

"No, thank you. I am better; I am quite strong. It was only the shock, the joy at seeing you and knowing I had not been deceived."

"Did you not expect to find me on your arrival in Greytown?" he asked.

"I—I really don't know. I feared—I could hardly dare hope that you were here, or that the letters were true."

"What object could any one have in deceiving you, mademoiselle?"

"I do not know; but there was so much mystery about it all that I could not but doubt it."

"Why, what mystery is there about it?"

"I inquired for you on my arrival, and could find no one who knew you or had ever heard of you."

A smile flitted over the dark stranger's face, and he answered:

"I had reasons for not being known here."

"What were they?"

"Nicaragua is undergoing another revolution. It is a chronic revolutionary country, and there is no safety for one when it is in those throes. I have had to come here secretly since the trouble began, and no one knows me by my real name."

"Does my father really live?" she asked with such eagerness that for a moment the dark stranger gazed at her in silence, then he answered:

"Yes."

"Thank Heaven! Thank Heaven! Take me to him at once!"

"Don't be impatient, my dear mademoiselle; you shall see him in due time."

"He is not at Greytown?"

"No."

"How near is he?"

After a short silence, as if carefully weighing his words before he uttered them, he answered:

"I cannot say just now, but we will find him. I know the tribe of Mosquitos who have him, and know that for five hundred dollars we can purchase his liberty."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes, once. I managed to get a few words with him."

"How does he look?" she asked, pressing her hands together in her anxiety.

"He was pale and emaciated, and showed some evidences of hard usage, mademoiselle; nevertheless—nevertheless, he said he was in good health."

"And he lives yet?"

"Yes."

"And you are acquainted with the chief of the tribe who holds him for ransom?"

"I am; and if my instructions are carried out, we will not fail to rescue your father in five days. Every precaution must be taken to leave Greytown for the abode of this Mosquito tribe without any one knowing that we are going."

"I will follow any directions you may give. I will be guided wholly by you, and whatever you may command I shall obey," she answered.

The dark stranger advised her to keep a still tongue in her head and mention their intended journey to no one. He explained that in the unsettled state of the country there was no knowing who were friends and who were foes. There were those even in Greytown who, if they knew they were going to the Mosquito chief with money to ransom a prisoner, would waylay and rob them.

"There will be some little risk in making this journey to the mountains," he concluded. "Are you willing to run the risk?"

"Could we have the prisoner brought here?"

"No. Why, five thousand dollars would be no inducement for that chief to risk his neck in Greytown."

"Is it necessary for me to go?"

"Certainly. If you expect to see your father, you must make the journey."

She consented, and he asked when she would be ready to start.

"At any time," she answered.

"Will to-morrow night be too soon?"

"It will be too late. Let us go at once. If I am to rescue my father, I have not a single moment to lose in doing it."

"It will be impossible for the mademoiselle to go to-night. We cannot be ready," said Le Clerc.

"How soon can you go?" she asked.

"To-morrow night is the earliest."

It was arranged to start the next night. Hallie took leave of the dark stranger, who again admonished her to keep her proposed journey a profound secret, and be ready by the rising of the moon. It was arranged that Miguel, the honest muleteer, was to meet her at the same rendezvous and conduct her to the shanty from where they were to take their departure.

She went back to the tavern with heart beating high with hope and excitement at the coming adventure and prospect of finding her father. She put a change of clothing into a carpet-bag and made up her money into a roll and placed it in a purse in her bosom. She anxiously waited for the hour of her departure to come. Her nervousness and anxiety were so great they excited the attention of the people in the house, and the same elderly merchant asked her if she was sure what she was engaged in was right.

"I am. I know I am right. God is with me. I can't explain it all to you, but I know that I am doing perfectly right."

"Then if you are sure you are right, take Davy Crockett's advice and go ahead."

That was just what she did. She was met by Miguel at the tree. Miguel's face wore the same expression of gravity, and his small black eyes blinked like a serpent's, while he silently twirled his mustache. She noticed that his low-cut shoes had been exchanged for riding-boots with spurs to them, and that his machete was slung with more care at his side, and his pistols polished. In addition to these he carried a carbine in his hand.

He bade her follow him, which she did without a word, and they passed through the same broken wall and down the same path through the mangroves. At the door of the hut they found several mules saddled for riding, and she was assisted to mount one that was provided with a lady's saddle. There were a dozen swarthy-looking men, with carbines, machetes and pistols, standing about. They were silent and ferocious, and the sight of them caused the unfortunate girl to shudder with dread. She looked about her for Monsieur Le Clerc, but at first did not see him. At last he came from the house and went hurriedly to her side.

"Mademoiselle," he said, with an anxious look on his face, "I cannot accompany you to-night, but I shall send you with a faithful escort."

"This is a serious disappointment, monsieur."

"Be of good cheer. I will join you before morning, and we will see your good father before to-morrow night. These are my men, and all are brave and faithful fellows and will protect you with their lives."

She did not speak her mind, or she would have said that they had more the appearance of brigands than an honest guard. Le Clerc saw that she was not pleased, and still continued to gaze at the escort.

"I suppose you would feel better if you had a companion of your own sex with you," he remarked, apologetically. "I have provided one for you; she is coming."

A dark-skinned senorita, who evidently had considerable Indian blood in her veins, came from the hut and mounted one of the mules.

"This is Senorita Bianca, and you will find her a pleasant companion, for she speaks English."

He then gave Miguel some parting instructions, and they started on their journey. The first few miles of their path wound along a stream. They left the river after they had gone about five miles and struck out across the country. A southern moon shone from a cloudless sky, and the scenery was lighted with almost the brilliance of day. The far-off peaks could be seen piercing the skies, and the rugged hills and wild, deep gorges and glens had a truly romantic appearance.

"No wonder father has been a prisoner all these years," she thought. "One could be concealed forever in this terrible forest!"

She could not repress a shudder when they came to some dark glade or glen through which a sluggish stream stole its way. Occasionally the dark, scaly back of an alligator could be seen on the bank, followed by a splash as the monster plunged into the water.

"Is the senorita afraid?" asked Bianca, whipping her mule alongside of Hallie.

"No, no, I will not be afraid."

"These are faithful men. They are brave, and will defend you unless they should overpower us."

"Who will overpower us?" asked Hallie.

"The mountain robbers."

"Are we not going to meet them? Is not my father a prisoner among them, and are we not going to ransom him?"

Bianca looked puzzled, and shrugged her pretty shoulders. She really did not know what the object of this midnight journey was, and said something about there being other robbers, perhaps, than those to whom she was going to pay ransom. But she assured her that the brave Miguel, who was a great captain, would defend her, she knew.

Miguel, at this compliment, touched his hat, and something like a grin flitted over his face. He was an egotistic knave, and easily flattered.

"Does the senorita come from America?" asked Bianca.

"Yes."

"I have heard much about that great country. Agitone is going there next time his master does."

Without feeling very much interest in the person called Agitone, Hallie asked who he was.

"He is my lover," Bianca explained. "We are going to marry some day, and then we will live on the mountain trail where the muleteers pass every day. We are going to keep a public house, and I will sell wine, while Agitone stables and feeds the mules."

It was a pleasant little picture which Bianca drew, but Hallie thought it could never be realized. The proposed interoceanic canal would put an end to the business of muleteers, and the poor little public house on the mountain road would languish for want of custom.

They were two or three hours in one of the most lovely valleys Hallie had ever seen in her life. The tall, feathery palms grew on every side. The orange groves, burdening the air with their fragrance, mingled with the sweet magnolias, and other wild flowers of the tropics, made it delightfully sweet to the senses. Beauty and sweetness seemed to abound everywhere.

Two or three of the muleteers seemed growing uneasy, and held frequent consultations. At last Agitone, the lover of Bianca, came back to her side, and for several moments they conversed in low tones, in Spanish, of which Hallie could not understand one word. When Agitone was gone again, Bianca asked:

"Do you know Miguel, the guide?"

"No. I never saw him until two or three days ago, when he told me where I could find Monsieur Le Clerc."

"Agitone has just told me that he and his muleteers suspect him."

"Is he a stranger to them? Is he not a muleteer?"

"He is a stranger, and is no muleteer, as he claims, and they suspect him."

"Of what do they suspect him?" asked Hallie, in amazement.

"He is a stranger to them, and they know he is not a muleteer. They suspect that he is one of the mountain robbers sent to decoy them. He may have deceived Monsieur Le Clerc. Agitone never saw this Monsieur Le Clerc until yesterday. They are all strangers."

Bianca was evidently filled with alarm, and Hallie began to doubt and dread them all. This might be a plan to rob her of the money she was carrying to ransom her father. The conduct of Le Clerc was very strange. Why had he gone another direction and left her with these people, unless it was that he feared them, or had turned her over to be robbed by them? These fears and doubts soon worked her up to an extreme state of nervous excitement bordering on desperation.

Her fears were not without foundation. They were ascending a mountain side, when a muleteer in the advance suddenly uttered a cry of alarm, fired a pistol, and, wheeling his mule about, galloped down the mountain side toward the others, crying in Spanish:

"Robbers! brigands!"

Agitone called to two or three of his companions, and they dashed forward. The sharp report of pistols and carbines rang out on the mountain-path not twenty rods ahead of them.

"Don't fight them! I have brought a ransom!" cried Hallie; but they either did not hear her or understand what she said, for Agitone was seen to fire another pistol and draw his machete. He was knocked from his saddle, one of his companions killed and others were wounded, and all made prisoners. Hallie looked about for the honest Miguel, and saw him seated at the roadside on a stone, smoking a cigar, and seemingly as indifferent to the result of the fight as if he was only a spectator gazing upon a show.

The brigands came up to Hallie and her companion and bade them dismount. In vain Hallie tried to explain that she was on her way to ransom her father. She was taken from her mule, the money taken from her person, and then she was informed that she would be held for ransom.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 13.]

WILLFUL PENELOPE.*

BY EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS,

Author of "A Conqueror of Fate," "Little Kit," "At a Great Cost."

["WILLFUL PENELOPE" was commenced in No. 48. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XXXII.

PENELOPE'S first thought, as she stood looking at her cousin, was one of sympathy. She said to herself, almost unconsciously, that she had never seen any one look so ill as Marcia did.

The subdued lights made Mrs. Latimar's pallor excessive, almost unnatural. She had a ghastly tinge in her cheeks; her lips were ghastly white; her eyes, set in deep, black circles, seemed phenomenally big. It was well-nigh impossible to realize that this phantom-like woman, preternaturally aged, worn and haggard, could be one and the same with the fine, handsome, dashing sort of girl that Marcia had been when Penelope went to pay that visit to her aunt in town.

Despite her sympathy, however, which was absolutely genuine and sincere, Penelope could not dispel that vague sense of repugnance that Marcia's presence aroused in her mind; she was also conscious that she trembled a little as with fear. Penelope never remembered to have ever felt before exactly as she did now; she had, indeed, always laughed at superstition and nervousness as being outside her character, and something feeble and incomprehensible, but she realized to-night she had been wrong to do this, for she was beset with a nervous apprehension that was not to be explained or dispelled.

Marcia did not answer at first to Penelope's inquiry how she was. She moved the fork restlessly to and fro on her plate, making a scratching noise.

Suddenly she looked up.

"Are they gone?" she asked, abruptly.

Penelope answered "Yes." Her nervousness increased. She felt an intangible, indefinite change in Marcia's manner. She had a terror all at once that what she had dreaded was about to come. Marcia was going to speak of Denis, and she must listen and bear all in silence, for to attempt a defense would be an impossibility, and to pretend a sympathy she did not feel would be another.

Marcia gave on odd little laugh.

"I am relieved to feel that abominable Riley girl is out of the house, if only for a little while; she is such a detestable creature," she remarked, shortly—"so common and so hideous."

Penelope felt a rush of indignation at this remark about one whom she loved as a friend and honored as a guest; but she curbed her feelings.

"I am afraid you have not eaten much dinner, Marcia," she said, trying to assume an air of lightness, which was not an easy thing.

Marcia shrugged her shoulders, and again laughed that odd, mirthless laugh.

"What does it matter whether I eat or not?" she said, bitterly.

Penelope knelt down and stirred the fire. Immediately after she regretted vaguely that she had done so. Marcia's face, seen in the blaze of light from the coals, gave her a new and further sense of discomfort.

"You must not talk like that," she said, still kneeling on the hearthrug and shielding her face with her delicate hands. "You know it matters a very, very great deal to everybody whether you are strong or weak."

"Does it really?"

Marcia's sneer was unmistakable. Penelope dropped her hands, rose to her feet, and stood by the fire. She paused a moment before speaking; she was not only nervous, but she felt angry in this moment. There was an undeniable lack of gratitude or affability about Mrs. Latimar now.

Penelope braced herself up for all that was to come. She purposely refused to see Marcia's sullen humor or her sneer.

"I hope you are not in great pain," she said, gently. "I am very sorry to say that the lotion Doctor Gregory promised to send has not arrived. If only Uncle Ge—I mean Doctor Westall—had come as I expected to-night."

Marcia turned swiftly.

"He is not coming?" she asked.

Penelope told her of the telegram. Marcia said nothing, only smiled to herself. There was a moment's silence between them, during which the blaze and crackling of the fire was the only sound in the room.

Penelope drew a swift, painful breath. If she could only leave Marcia! Five minutes only had gone of the ordeal that stretched before her! How should she endure the rest?

Marcia suddenly broke the silence.

"I always considered myself an unlucky person," she said, speaking in an odd, jerky way, and addressing no one in particular; "but in future I think I shall change my opinion. For once, at least, luck has come to me. I must make the best of it—yes, I must make the best of it now I have got it!"

Penelope did not follow the meaning of these words; but the sense of depression, of nervousness closed in upon her more heavily. She stood by the fire uncertain, almost awkward. She did not like to leave Marcia, and yet her cousin gave her no inducement to stay.

Had she been able to consult her own wishes, she would have gone to her own room and have tried what rest and complete silence would do for her aching head and for the tumult of miserable thoughts that burdened her heart.

"Do you know why I consider myself particularly in luck to-night?" Marcia asked all at once, abruptly.

Penelope tried to laugh.

"Indeed, Marcia, dear, I do not. I cannot see how such a painful accident as you have had could be regarded as being anything but unlucky."

Marcia leaned forward; the full light of the fire-blaze illumined her face.

"Are you sorry for my accident? Are you sorry I should suffer pain?" she asked in the same odd manner that had come over her the past few moments.

Penelope answered unhesitatingly.

"Of course I am sorry, Marcia, dear. How could it be otherwise? I am more than sorry you should have the smallest pain or illness."

Marcia's eyes blazed like fury, her lips drew themselves into a thin line. She paused an instant, then in cold, clear, distinct tones she said:

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"You are a liar and a hypocrite, Penelope Desborough!"

Penelope shrank back as from a blow.

"Marcia!" she cried, sharply.

There was hot, wounded pride in the one word. The force of this insult gave her sudden strength and courage as she realized all it meant.

"You are a liar and a hypocrite!" Marcia repeated, but not very distinctly; her lips were stiff with the rage that was consuming her. She was trembling with excitement, and with the fury of her mad jealousies and hatred. She rose swiftly from the chair, and before Penelope's unhinged nerves could comprehend all that was happening she had swept to the door, turned the key sharply, and put it in her pocket.

"Perhaps you begin to see where my luck comes in now, my dear cousin," she said, with that shrill, horrible imitation of a laugh. "Perhaps you begin to understand a little now."

She was walking slowly toward Penelope, who stood by the fire petrified into silence and stillness by the horrible fear that ran through her veins.

Marcia, as she advanced in her slow way across the room, the flickering light showing her white, infuriated face, her arms crossed over her bosom, had an unnatural and terrible look.

Penelope realized in this awful moment what before had been vague, incomprehensible to her—the odd words Doctor Westall had said about Marcia's condition, Lady Susan's indescribable aversion, and her own fear and nervous repugnance.

The face before her was the face of one whose mind was more than unsettled, whose brain was not only disordered but diseased.

The girl was bewildered for one moment by the swiftness and weight of the horror that had come upon her; but she rallied her courage and called up every grain of her moral and physical strength.

There was but one thing to do—to humor the mood of the moment, no matter what it cost her. She braced herself up for the attack. She saw that the storm was about to break. She knew instantly that the security which she had imagined and believed was wrapped about the truth regarding Denis and herself did not exist at all. Marcia by some means had learned the story. Penelope must suffer the consequences of such an unhappy circumstance.

As these thoughts flitted like lightning through her brain for one instant the intensity of her fear gave way to relief in the remembrance that this time at least the horror of Marcia's jealous fury would be shared by no outside person, that her tender, beautiful, sad secret would not be laid bare for all eyes to see and all minds to question.

This and a sudden swift pang of agonized sympathy for the man she loved, filled Penelope's thoughts in the silence that followed on Marcia's last speech; but it did not last long.

She was no coward, as we have shown; for love's sake she had borne with and hidden the most intense physical pain, had gone through a daily task for weeks almost at the risk of permanently injuring herself—and all for the sake of love; therefore, Penelope could never be branded with cowardice. Yet her vigorous young heart grew like stone in her breast, and a cold perspiration broke out on her brow as she let her eyes meet the pair before her, and the full danger of her position was suddenly revealed to her.

The absolute cunning Marcia had displayed in pretending a serious accident, the words she had spoken of her sudden good luck, the expression throughout her whole person—all this would have revealed to Penelope that she was face to face with a horrible danger, even if she had not seen Marcia's swiftness to avail herself of the only means of keeping her victim a prisoner and so having her in her undisputed power and at the mercy of her savage will. Penelope subdued the sick feeling that overcame her with a strength that despair lent force to.

"I do not understand you in the very least, Marcia," she said, speaking as steadily as she could, but vaguely conscious that the sound of her voice was strangely hoarse and indistinct in her ears. "Please be frank with me. I am ignorant of having done you any wrong, and I am at an absolute loss to know what your present extraordinary conduct can mean! If you have anything to bring against me, any cause for quarrel, let us speak of the matter quietly and decently, and not indulge in foolish and unnecessary scenes!"

Her voice grew steadier and clearer as she spoke. Her contempt and her dignity were as so much fuel to the flame of Marcia's fury. She leaned her head forward with a sort of serpent-like movement, and then, before Penelope could draw back, she had put out her hand and grasped the girl's wrist with her slender, burning fingers in a grip that was like iron.

"You have done me no wrong? You! you! you! who are the cause of all my misery! You, who have done me the greatest harm one woman can do another! You! Liar and hypocrite are words too good for you!"

Marcia ceased suddenly. She gave a half staggering movement, as though she had received a blow from some invisible person; her eyes became staring and fixed. She seemed to fight for actual breath, but she did not release her hold on Penelope's arm; and, conquering her difficulty, whatever it was, she went on, her voice this time thick and uncertain:

"My husband has gone! Denis has left me! All the world will know it and laugh! And it is you!—you!" Again she fought for breath. "Lie to me it is not you! Tell me you did not know, that it was not you who made him so! Oh, how I hate you!—how I hate you!" Vigor came back to her all at once. "How I have longed, prayed for this moment, to have you alone, to tell you what I think of you, to make you suffer—suffer as I have done! I—I—"

Once again there came that half-staggering, half-bending movement; the words died away into a moan; there was something like froth about the pallid lips. Her fingers unloosened involuntarily from their grip.

Penelope, released from the contact of those fingers, tried in vain to move; her limbs seemed frozen; through her brain ran the agonized cry:

"Oh, Heaven, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

She was caged in like a rat; there was no escape, no one to come to her help. The bell-rope was at the other side of the room. Were she to make a step in that direction, Marcia would be upon her; those hard, burning fingers might twine themselves this time, not about her wrist, but about her throat.

Penelope did not lose her consciousness for one single instant. No merciful oblivion came to relieve the exquisite torture she was suffering. She could do nothing but stand rooted to the spot and send up that agonized cry from her heart.

It was useless to try to evade the truth—useless to seek to disguise her danger. She knew that in this moment Marcia was no sane woman, and that the one burning purpose in her maddened brain was to do her some injury—some evil. Penelope's whole soul shrank before this thought—she did not know what to do, how to act.

If only there had been some one near—some one who would hear her voice if she called loudly and suddenly. Memory brought deeper despair. There was no one to help her, even if she would have called aloud for aid. Though she was face to face with one of the most horrible situations any woman could face, remembrance of Denis, of all that lay outside and beyond, did not pass from her. If only she could temporize with Marcia, argue with her, bring her into a human mood! To speak was to augment the mad woman's unreasoning anger, yet Penelope resolved to try the force of words again.

She turned her head courageously to the figure standing so strangely motionless beside her. In all her great agitation, it was evident to her that Marcia was going through some physical ordeal; she seemed contracted as with a sudden agony; her hands were gripped together and pressed over her lips.

Penelope's courage came back with a rush.

"Marcia," she said, hurriedly, "Marcia, you are ill. Let me help you."

She put out her hands imploringly. Marcia, with a sort of contortion, twisted herself away, and beat down the outstretched hands with a fierce blow.

"Keep away! Keep away!" she said, the words coming from between her lips as with a supreme effort. "If you come near, I will kill you!—kill—"

Penelope was conscious of a dull, dead pain from the force of the blow she had received, but she took no heed of it. She saw that Marcia was very ill; it was impossible to shut her eyes to the fact that her cousin was suffering intensely. Everything passed from her in this moment but a desire to do something to alleviate this suffering.

"You are ill," she said again; "but if you will not let me help you, I will ring, and you—"

Before she could speak another word or move a step, Marcia had flung herself in front of her.

"You shall not have help! I have got you here alone! I shall lose my chance! You shall not go—"

She had to clutch at a chair for support, even as she spoke so defiantly. Penelope's fear grew less, her pity more.

"Marcia, dear," she said, gently, "do listen to me. Surely you will listen. You have said very cruel things to me. I hope, I think, you cannot really mean them. You are angry with me, but please, please do not let your anger last. On my honor I swear—"

"Your honor!—yours!" Marcia broke in, feebly yet savagely. "You, a woman who disgraces herself with another woman's husband! You, who—"

"Marcia!" Penelope's last fear went from her. She stood in front of her cousin's crouching figure and pallid, livid face like a beautiful, avenging spirit. A world of indignation, of horror, of contempt blazed from her eyes; but she checked the words that trembled on her lips; she realized the folly of speaking any remonstrance at such a moment: and, indeed, her very just anger gave place once more to pity and uneasiness as she looked into Marcia's face and saw the story written there.

"It is impossible for us to discuss this thing now; another time, when your anger is less, when you are calmer."

Marcia gave a short, low laugh; all suffering as she was, struggling with some almost overwhelming pain, fighting for breath, her purpose was not one iota lessened.

"You are very clever," she said, in that halting, uncertain way, "but we are not going to wait—you and I! You take me for a fool; but you are mistaken. I am no fool; I am an injured woman, and I will have my just revenge. You shall not live to crow over me, to sit and laugh at your work. You got my husband away, you shall answer to me for it—do you hear? Answer to me!"

"I will answer to you most certainly, Marcia, for any wrong I have done you," Penelope said, gently. The spectacle of the miserable wreck of womanhood before her sent a pang through her. "Do not think I want to avoid an explanation; I only want to postpone it. Can you not see how bad all this agitation is for you? You are ill, in pain; I entreat you to let me help you. If you get into bed and rest, it will, perhaps, do you good, Marcia."

Marcia stood silent an instant. The expression of her face showed only too plainly she could make no answer for a moment.

Penelope put out her hand once again and tried to lead her. There was no blow in answer this time; she was conscious of a distinct thrill as some swift spasm of pain swept through the woman's frame before her. She began to plead, to urge.

Marcia made no sign; but all at once she began to speak. Her voice was little more than a whisper, but it went direct to Penelope's already overweighted heart, and made her chill with a feeling not to be described.

"I am ill, you say! I know it—I am dying! When they come home they will find me dead, alone with you. You will have killed me! You love my husband: you want me to die. You are my murderer! Go to Denis now, if you dare, and take his love—you, who have killed his wife! May you be happy, you wicked, wicked—"

Penelope's arms went about her cousin suddenly.

"Oh, Marcia! Marcia! May God forgive you and help us!" she cried, wildly.

Her strength, her courage, her endurance went from her.

Death, indeed, seemed written on Marcia's face and in her eyes. Even as Penelope's whole strength was put out to support her, she gave a gasping sigh—a sort of horrible moan of pain—and slipping heavily from those slender arms, she sank in a huddled mass on the floor.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Walking steadily up the dark avenue of Thicket Croft grounds, a man enveloped in a rough ulster, and carrying a gladstone bag, arrived at the old-fashioned entrance to find another man, younger than himself, smartly arrayed in immaculate evening dress, ringing lustily at the bell. A dog-cart was waiting for this young man, with a groom at the horse's head.

The last comer stooped abruptly and looked keenly at Doctor Gregory, for the young man in the evening dress was he.

"Can't make yourself heard, eh?" he inquired in a short, curt way which belonged exclusively to Doctor Westall. "Everybody gone to this dance, I suppose. Pull again, sharply!"

Philip Gregory obeyed, not without irritation.

"Everybody can't have gone," he observed testily. "Miss Desborough, I know, had no intention of doing so in any case; and now that she has an invalid—"

"Some one ill?" Doctor Westall inquired quickly. "You can speak freely to me," he added, seeing Doctor Gregory's hesitation. "I am one of Miss Desborough's oldest friends, and I am a medical man into the bargain. My name is Westall."

The younger doctor immediately showed his appreciation of a name that was widely known throughout the medical world.

"We are of the same profession," he said almost diffidently. "I, too, am a medical man, although only an humble individual at present. My name is Philip Gregory. I am glad to meet you, and doubly so on this occasion, as I shall defer, if you will allow me, to your superior knowledge, for instance, in this present case. I confess it has both puzzled and troubled me." He told of Marcia's accident, and then showed a packet he held in his hand. "I have driven into ———," naming the nearest town, "for this, and thought on my way to the ball, I would just run in with it myself and see if I could do anything to relieve the excessive pain Mrs. Latimar complained of."

Doctor Westall said nothing, only gripped the handle of his bag more closely.

"Ring again," he said, tersely, after a moment's silence, and then he gave a quick, short sigh, almost of relief, as the big door swung back and Downs was revealed in the opening, with all the evidence of being aroused suddenly from deep sleep.

Doctor Westall began questioning him immediately. "Where were the servants? Where was Miss Penelope? How came it the house was so deserted?" a dozen such queries.

Downs, of course, lost his temper.

"You wasn't expected; Miss Penelope said as you wasn't a-comin'," he said, surlily; but Doctor Westall took no notice of his ill-temper. He cast off his coat and threw his hat to follow it.

"Come in, Doctor Gregory," he said; "as you are here, we had better ascertain if Mrs. Latimar can see you"—then Doctor Westall stopped short. "Hark! What was that?"

"I heard nothing," the younger man said, a little startled by the sudden transition of manner. He came into the hall obediently. Doctor Westall stood listening, his brows contracted; then he turned to Downs, swiftly, his face full of an expr sion it would have been difficult to describ

"Where is your mistress? With M Latimar, you say—yes; but what room which floor?"

Downs, electrified by this curt questi ing, gave the information required.

"Doctor Gregory, I shall be obliged if y will follow me," the older medical man sai quietly. He led the way to the broad sta case. "Thank Heaven," he muttered, und his breath, "I decided to come to-nigh Who shall say there is nothing in present ment, after all?"

He paused an instant, and leaned forw once again.

A faint sound, as of a woman's voice i pain, came to the ears of both men. Utt ing an inarticulate exclamation, Doct Westall ran hurriedly up the stairs, Phil Gregory just behind him, his face filled wi a look of vague alarm and anxiety. Doct Westall's manner communicated this to hi more eloquently than words; there w something, too, in the whole atmosphere the quiet old house that seemed to speak some unusual event—something almost my terious.

The sound of the voice calling feebly f help guided their steps as they paused a instant on the first landing.

"This way," Doctor Westall said.

In another moment they were outside t door of the room Downs had told them w allotted to Mrs. Latimar. Doctor Westa gave that quick exclamation again as tried to enter and the door resisted him.

"Locked!" he said to himself. "Is m fear going to turn out true?" Turning a instant to the young man beside him, said: "Put your shoulder against this. W must break it in." Out loud he cried, strong tones: "It is I, Penelope. I a here. Keep away from the door, child. W are breaking it in."

A sharp crash followed on his words. he recovered his breath and his senses aft a momentary stagger when the door yield suddenly, Philip Gregory looked quick around him.

Doctor Westall had already grasped a h ble figure in his arms, and was holding it his heart for an instant; then he had turn and put his burden into the arms of t housekeeper, Kate's mother, who, hearing their arrival, had come quickly after th up the stairs.

"Take her away at once—at once!" D tor Westall said, as well as he could spea then he put his hand on Philip Gregor shoulder. "This is bad business, I a afraid," he said; "worse than I expected

The dim light of the room had blinded eyes at first; but at these words Doct Gregory glanced in the same direction as companion, and he gave an involunta shudder. Lying almost at their feet wa motionless body, the arms thrown out, face gleaming white and set; by the glow could be seen a dark stream of bl running from the lips, staining the delica colored carpet.

"Turn up the light," Doctor Westall co manded.

He knelt beside Marcia and lifted head with one hand, while he felt for heart with the other.

"Dead?" asked the young doctor, the horror of the moment ringing in his voice

The other shook his head.

"We are in the very nick of time," said. "If we only had help! But we m do our best. I have foreseen this all alo Will you take orders from me?"

Doctor Gregory answered instantly a deferentially:

"Yes, sir," and the old doctor was plea at his simple deference.

The next few minutes were devoted trying every possible means to stop the f of blood. Together they lifted the woma form and laid it flat on the bed. They worked in utter silence, except when older man gave an order, but as this was accomplished, Doctor Westall sp suddenly:

"We must have ice—otherwise—" shook his head.

"My groom shall get some. I will and—"

But Doctory Gregory was interrupted the entrance of Kate—Kate, breathl white, in tears, almost frantic.

"Oh, Doctor Westall, will you co please? Miss Penelope will die. She awful! Oh, do come to her, sir, do come

Doctor Westall's manner was almost duly harsh as he silenced the excited g

"Miss Penelope will not die. She fainted. Mrs. Latimar is much more li to die if you don't do something to help Stop that noise and go and get some ice expect you have some in the house; if tell Doctor Gregory's groom to drive quickly as he knows how to bring some all you servants had remembered your d better, and not gone gadding about leaving your mistress all alone, none of would have happened."

Poor Kate's eyes filled with tears at reproach. She had suffered most keenly she had seen her mother bending over nelope's prostrate form and had caught glimpse of the white, still face. She not the least idea of what Doctor West words could mean beyond the fact th some way Miss Penelope's illness caused by being left alone with Mrs. L mar.

However sorrowful though she felt at mere suggestion of having failed in duty, Kate proved herself of great u both doctors.

Ice was forthcoming immediately, and in a short while the medical men had the satisfaction of seeing success crown their efforts, although the danger and seriousness of the case were still very great.

Of his own free will Philip Gregory offered to remain at Thicket Croft all night. He dismissed his groom and settled himself by the bed where Marcia lay, to all intents and purposes a dead rather than a living creature.

"I will watch her," he said. "You will like to go to Miss Desborough."

Whatever natural curiosity the young man may have felt, and, indeed, the circumstances were enough to arouse the most lively curiosity, he made no comment and asked no questions. He was but lightly affected, however, by the anxiety and trouble that were manifested by Doctor Westall, in the knowledge that the accident and agony Marcia had apparently endured in his presence only a few hours before had been, as he had half expected, nothing but a myth. Doctor Westall had made a quick examination of the supposed injured ankle, and had confirmed the younger man's theory as he disclosed its soundness.

From this, and much more, too, Doctor Gregory could not fail to gather some faint idea of the matter before him, and the fear the old doctor had expressed in his agitation and excitement on entering the house was almost fully explained.

Doctor Westall accepted his young colleague's offer to remain with a curt word of thanks. But Philip Gregory by this time felt that he was almost an old acquaintance of the grim-spoken, tender-hearted, clever physician, and accepted his manner accordingly. It was with a feeling of security about Marcia for the moment that Doctor Westall sought his child's room and ministered to her.

The fainting fit was of unusual duration, and he had time to sponge away a mass of congealed blood from the small right hand, showing a jagged wound that he conjectured, and conjectured rightly, Marcia's sharp teeth had caused, before there came the faintest flutter of life from between the white lips, or a flicker of faintest movement in the closed eyelids. As the work of bathing, dressing and bandaging the poor swollen and discolored hand was nearly finished, however, there came a sigh that told of the soul's awakening from its merciful spell of oblivion; and as Doctor Westall bent tenderly over the beautiful face that bore such a look of anguish and terror and pain, the heavy-fringed lids were lifted, and Penelope's blue eyes regained their sight and consciousness. The words that trembled on her lips were tenderly hushed into silence.

"You are not to talk yet; there is plenty of time. I am here, you see, so all is right now. Please to open your lips and swallow this. No refusal. You know I never allow any patients to disobey me. Drink it down, every drop!"

Weak as an infant, scarcely comprehending the extent of the relief that had come to her, Penelope obeyed. In a few moments, aided by Kate, the girl was wrapped in a comfortable dressing-gown and laid on her favorite couch, lost this time to sound and sight in a deep, dreamless sleep.

"That will last some hours," Doctor Westall said to himself with satisfaction, as he stood looking down on the young face. "Poor lamb," he added, with a quick, involuntary shudder, as his eyes fell again on the bandaged hand, "what an experience! What an awful thing to have happened to her! I dread to let her tell me all that took place, and yet it would be better for her to speak when she is able. Good heavens," mused on Doctor Westall, as he paced to and fro, "what cunning the creature has had! How is it no one but me has seen this distinct trail of mania in her nature? It has been a hard matter for me to keep silence on this point, and yet, again, it has been well-nigh impossible to speak what I have felt. When a person is mad right through, with no extenuating moments of sanity, then it is straight sailing; but with this woman— And yet," was the next thought, "sometimes I have felt that Denis Latimar was of my opinion. He never could have stood the perpetually repeating horror of those furious moods had he not told himself his wife—at least at such times—was not to be dealt with as one would deal with a sane woman. The fullness of the danger Denis has never, of course, grasped for a single instant; otherwise he would have taken some means to have guarded others from the violence that was inevitable to a brain filled with homicidal intentions."

Doctor Westall stopped to look back again at the girl's motionless figure on the sofa; the faint, regular breathing came to his ears as pleasant as music, for he knew that the potent sedative had taken absolute effect; nevertheless he shook his head sadly and gravely.

"The result of this night's work will live with her for many and many a week to come," he said to himself. He knew almost without words the sort of scene Marcia must have indulged in, and, feeling certain now of her hatred of her cousin, the doctor allowed his imagination to sketch the worst picture possible. "If Denis could have only known this, how he would have worked every fiber in his being to keep these two apart! Where is Denis? Why is he not here? Surely he must have heard of her accident. He must know she is here under Penelope's roof. He cannot be at this dance; and yet why not? He may have gone in ignorance, or she may have used her cunning so well as to prevail on him to go; but no, I feel he would not have left her here alone. Well!" Doctor Westall finished his communing with a short sigh. "Poor lad! wherever he is, and whenever he comes, he will come to find a sorry story awaiting him. The future looks as black as the grave, with this woman on his shoulders eating the very life out of him; for she will not go yet. There is tough stuff in her constitution, despite the local weaknesses. If her brain should become hopelessly diseased, who can say how long Marcia Latimar may not last? God forbid I should wish any living creature harm, but I should be glad, for many reasons, to know there was an end to this wretched woman and the misery she will cause."

On his way out to join Doctor Gregory's watch, the old physician paused by Penelope's side an instant.

"At least," he said to himself, softly and tenderly, "she shall do you no more harm, my little one. If there is none other who may have the right to guard and keep you in safety, then I will take upon myself that right. You shall never know such trouble again while life and strength are left me."

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 13.]

IN SEARCH OF GOLD.*

BY COLIN MIDDLETON,

Author of "The Fool of Destiny," "Innes of Blairavon," etc.

["IN SEARCH OF GOLD" was commenced in No. 52. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XXIV.

AND LAST.

IT was some time before Ivor got over the shock and strain of his great struggle for life with Löwe. An inquiry was held as to Löwe's death, and it was very soon determined that Ivor had killed him in self-defense, and the bench took upon itself, moreover, to congratulate Mr. Gwynne on having rid the colony of a pestilent scoundrel.

Things went on in their ordinary nature at the mine, and Ivor began to think that he might be going home for a visit. He tried many times to broach the subject to Beausire, but always failed, thinking that Beausire might take it unkind in him to wish to absent himself from work at the mine just when it had really begun to make their fortunes.

During all this time Beausire's symptoms had become aggravated. His fits of joy and despair succeeded one another with painful quickness, until Ivor thought that he was going to be really unwell.

All his doubts, however, were set at rest one Monday morning when Beausire came cantering up, with a face radiant with delight.

He threw himself out of the saddle and ran up to Ivor.

"Ivor, old man, I am going to be married—the finest girl in the world—and you are going to be best man; and I am going home for my honeymoon."

"By Jove! I am glad, Beausire," said Ivor, as he wrung Beausire's hand. "Who is she?"

"A Miss Cartwright, daughter of old Cartwright, the squatter, who lives on the other side of Castlemaine. We are going to be married in a month, and I am the happiest man alive."

"I will go with you to England."

"Right you are, old man. Here's Courtenay. Courtenay," he shouted to the old man, "I am going to get married."

"I am delighted to hear it; a most excellent step for a young man to take. To whom, may I ask?"

"To Miss Cartwright, of Tinnimyhallormoo."

"The daughter of a most excellent father. Beausire, you are in luck."

"Don't need to tell me that. I know it only too well. Ivor, you must come over and see her next Sunday."

"With the greatest pleasure in life. But sha'n't I be rather in the way?"

"Not in the least. There's Mary, her sister, who would suit you exactly."

Ivor smiled. He was proof against the charms of many Marys.

However, on the following Sunday he did go over to Castlemaine, and found that any praises which Beausire could bestow on his *fiancée* were not exaggerated.

Miss Cartwright was a charming girl, endowed with that delicate, fragile beauty which belongs to Australian girls alone, and which is to English beauty as a hot-house flower is to one grown in the open air; and though, perhaps, more brilliant, it fades more quickly than the bluffer, haler beauty of an English girl.

Ivor was delighted with the family, and again warmly congratulated Beausire on his good fortune as they rode back to Gwynne's Creek on the Monday morning.

"Yes," said Beausire, "I think I have fallen on my feet. It is all due to you, old chap. You have made a man of me. I don't like to think now where I might have been and what I might have been doing if I had not met you on that ship."

"Bosh!" said Ivor.

"It ain't bosh, and you know it."

They rode on in silence after this for some time, and then Beausire suddenly burst into a loud laugh.

"What is it, Beausire?"

"I can't help thinking of my governor's disgust when I go home, rich, married and respectable. I think I must pacify him by offering to lend him some money. He will snap at that quick enough, but I am afraid it will take him a long time to get over the fact that I have so utterly and totally disappointed his expectations."

"I expect you are maligning him."

"Not I. You don't know my governor; the most cantankerous old dog in all England."

The days seemed to fly during that last month: so many arrangements had to be made, and so many instructions to be given. Ivor promised Courtenay to be back in six months, and Beausire said that he would be a year away. Neither he nor Ivor had any intention of finally quitting Australia for some few years to come.

Beausire now was as merry as a child—just as he had been on board the ship coming out from England, but with this difference, that his mirth then was the result of pure recklessness, and now it was the mirth of pure joy. He constantly reverted to the surprise which his father would experience at his failure to go to the devil.

"Constance will carry out the good work which you have begun, Ivor, and the 'Rose of Glanwythian' will help to patch up the broken fortunes of our house. I expect the governor to be deuced civil to me."

"After all, he is your father, Beausire."

"I am well aware of that fact, but he is such a pompous old stick, and it will be good for him to be compelled to show a certain amount of respect to a son whom he has always despised. Don't you fret, Ivor, I will let the old man down gently. Only I must have a joke out of it."

The night before Beausire was to be married he and Ivor sat silently smoking in the little veranda of their house. They had nothing to say to each other. Their unforeseen wanderings in company had produced a bond of union between them which they knew must now be partially severed. Singly they would, perhaps, have gone to the wall—Ivor certainly would have been long dead, and Beausire would probably have been by now that most contemptible of all people, a drunken "sundowner."

Their thoughts evidently ran in the same channel, for, after a long silence, Beausire said:

"Do you believe in chance, Ivor?"

"After what has happened to us, I would be a dull dog if I didn't."

"It is, at any rate, the simplest explanation of most events. Our last night, old chap. Do you regret the chance that brought us together?"

"I regard it as the happiest event that has ever occurred to me."

"I hope that it may always be so until the happiest of all occurs. You had better take Mary, Ivor; she would suit you exactly."

Ivor laughed, and didn't answer, and they went to bed.

Beausire was going to spend a fortnight in Melbourne, and then go home in a P. and O. steamer. Ivor was going to make the final arrangements at the mine and then join him in Melbourne.

Ivor said he wouldn't bother Beausire by writing to him. His berth was taken, and there was nothing to be said.

In the very early morning they rode into Vaughan and took the train to Castlemaine.

Ivor was going to stop at the hotel over the night. Anatole met them, beaming.

"Ah, Anatole, how are things going? Is the hotel full?"

"Scarcely a soul—it is not the time; but there is one charming mees, tall, beautiful, divine," and Anatole kissed his hand to the air.

"And how are you getting on? Have you had an explanation with Lola?"

"Lola is everything that a loving husband could desire."

"You followed Mr. Courtenay's suggestion, then?"

"Yes, but not with the stick. No. I was fierce, I spoke to her like a bear; at first she paid no attention and called me *cochon*, but when she saw that I was earnest, she became polite; she no longer called me *cochon*, and then from politeness she came once more to affection, and I am happy."

"I congratulate you, Anatole."

"But it was not without difficulty. I said to two or three of the young gentlemen who came here always: 'Gentlemen, I am very glad to see you here, but I must request you not to flirt with my wife, she must be treated with respect.' They blustered, as you English do, and said that they do treat her with respect. I was calm, dignified, and merely shrug the shoulders and say nothing. They depart, cursing, but they have come no more to flirt with Lola."

"That is most gratifying, Anatole. I hope you see that firmness is better than sighing and whimpering."

"But yes, monsieur; still, it will never occur again, I think. In some few months' time I hope that Lola may have a little son or daughter, and that will put a stop to flirting. Ah, monsieur, I am quite happy!"

"I am delighted to hear it; very few men can say that they are quite happy."

"But you, monsieur—you are rich now and will be richer soon. What more? Ah, you must marry the wife, monsieur. There are plenty of ravishing young ladies about here."

"Don't talk nonsense, Anatole. I am going to stay the night here, and shall want to dine at half-seven."

"Perfectly!" said Anatole.

Beausire betrayed none of the nervousness which affects most people at their own wedding. He was perfectly convinced that he was going to be happy and would make his wife happy, and was only anxious that it might be as soon as possible. After the wedding was over and Ivor had seen Beausire and his bride drive away from her father's house, a dreary sense of loneliness came over him for the first time.

He refused a pressing invitation to stay to dinner, and came sadly back to the hotel at Castlemaine.

As always happens, he had never fully appreciated the necessity of Beausire's companionship until he had lost it.

Supposing, when he went home, he found that Gwen was married or would not marry him, he would indeed be a lonely man.

By the time he reached the hotel he was in a thoroughly depressed condition.

Anatole received him with effusion, and said that his dinner would be ready punctually in the coffee-room.

"I don't feel much like company; I have had too much of it to-day. Can I have a private sitting-room?"

"Certainly. John," calling to a waiter, "show Mr. Gwynne up to No. 10."

Ivor followed the waiter upstairs and opened the door of No. 10; and Ivor went in, and the door was closed after him again.

He put his hat on the little table beside the door, and, looking round into the room, saw, standing beside the fireplace, the one being he loved best in the world.

With a cry, half of surprise, half of intense joy, he ran toward her with arms outstretched, and said:

"Gwennie, my darling!"

Gwen advanced to meet him, and in an instant Ivor was covering her face, her hand, her hair with kisses.

One glimpse of each other had done so easily what years of writing might never do.

At this moment the door opened, and Anatole, peering in, said:

"Pardon, monsieur; there is a mistake; this is—"

"Get out!" roared Ivor; and Anatole shut the door and ran downstairs for his life.

When Gwen had dried her tears of joy, Ivor said:

"Why did you come here, my beloved?"

"Oh, Ivor, I thought you were never coming back to me, and I could not live without seeing you."

"Then this was your mysterious visit abroad, of which the old housekeeper told me. I don't think it was fair to leave me so in suspense. I have been nearly out of my mind for the last six months."

"Well, dear, your letters were so indifferent, so perfunctory, that I was sure that you did not care for me, and I did so want to see you again, perhaps without your seeing me. You don't think it forward or—or—unwomanly of me to have come, do you, dear?"

Gwen got no articulate answer to this question.

After some moments, Ivor said:

"Ah, Gwen, you could not read between the lines, else you would have seen that I was eating out my heart with desire to see you again. You did not get my letter, then, which I wrote some six months ago?"

"No, dear. You see I did not decide to come here all at once; it took me many months to make up my mind. I was afraid—oh, I don't know how to explain to you. You see, men look at these matters in a different light. It is supposed to be right that a woman should take no step in a matter—oh, please don't ask me to explain, Ivor! I went to Rome and Florence, and then one day I wrote off for a ticket on the P. and O. boat from Brindisi, and I have been here about a fortnight."

Gwen hid her blushing face in her hands, and Ivor said very quietly:

"That letter which I wrote to you, Gwennie, was to ask you to be my wife. I am rich—rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

"Oh, Ivor, I am so glad! At last—you are rich!"

"It isn't a very long 'at last,' dear, after all; but it has seemed an eternity to me. Gwennie, you haven't answered the question I asked in that letter."

Gwen turned her sweet face to him, and said in a low voice:

"Is there any need, you foolish old Ivor?"

And so it was thus that Ivor's doubts and fears were finally set at rest.

After they had been sitting together about an hour and a half, Ivor suddenly remembered that he was ravenously hungry, and Gwen, too, had been awaiting her dinner when Ivor arrived.

Ivor rang, and Anatole appeared.

"We want dinner at once here, Anatole."

"But, certainly. Monsieur's dinner has been ready for more than an hour."

"Well, then, let us have it at once."

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"For two?" said Anatole, raising his eyebrows ever so slightly.

"This is the lady who is going to be my wife."

"Ah, my congratulations, monsieur, and to you also, mademoiselle. Then monsieur knew all the time that the charming mees of whom I spoke was his *fiancée*. Ah, but they are sensitive, these English."

"No, no, Anatole; it was a surprise to me as much as to you; but we are going to be married here, and you will have to come to our wedding."

"But, certainly, sir, with all the pleasure—and Lola, too?"

"Dinner now, Anatole."

"In the twinkle of the eye," said Anatole, as he turned away to tell Lola that *ce drôle*, Monsieur Gwynne, had found the strange lady in the hotel, and had decided to marry her out of hand.

Ivor and Gwen were married two days before the ship sailed for England, and when they came up the side of the ship, Beausire and his wife were waiting to greet Ivor.

Beausire stared at Ivor as he helped Gwen up the ship's side, and wondered who the deuce he had got hold of, and why he was paying such extraordinarily marked attention to her.

After shaking hands, Ivor turned to Gwen, and taking her hand, said to Beausire:

"Let me introduce you to my wife."

This was too much for Beausire; he entirely forgot his manners, and merely stared in amazement from Gwen to Ivor, and from Ivor to Gwen.

It was what the French call *un peu fort*, that a man whom, a fortnight ago, he had left a lonely and desolate bachelor, should have discovered and married a wife and be on his homeward way to spend his honeymoon.

Ivor, seeing his amazement, left Gwen to Mrs. Beausire, and, taking Beausire aside, said:

"It's all right, old chap; it is a case of Mahomet and the mountain. We have been in love with each other any time the last ten years."

Beausire gripped Ivor's hand, and the great ship swung slowly round and started, bearing, at any rate, four entirely happy people on their way home to England.

THE END.

◆

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE CHILDREN?

The school census of New York shows that there are 70,000 fewer children in this city than were registered a year ago. Either there is a very serious mistake in the enumeration or truancy is rapidly on the increase. That this is the most rational explanation no one who has taken the trouble to observe the streets during school hours can doubt.

While our school laws are fairly comprehensive, and by many thought to be sufficiently strict for all practical purposes, it is a notorious fact that they are not only insufficiently enforced, but in many cases are an absolutely dead letter. What is everybody's business is nobody's business. There ought to be appointments of special agents, whose duty it is to know the wherabouts of school children, and to see that all the provisions of the law are complied with. Children of school age are kept home and put at work in direct violation of law. They are sent to school and they go when they please.

It has been stated that there are scores of little ones in certain neighborhoods who regularly start out for school in the morning, and finding some suitable place of deposit for their books and school equipment, go pleasuring and pass the entire time of school hours at a distance from home, returning at the accustomed time, books upon back, as though nothing had happened. Certain pupils have never presented themselves at school since the term began. Naturally, hearing no complaint the parents take it for granted that all is well. Other children are reported for absence, but theirs are not, and this fact prevents any suspicion.

Every city should be districted off, and a censor should keep tally on the youngsters who are supposed to be in school and are spending their time in idle and vicious company, learning mischief and crime when they should be attending to their studies.

There is nothing more important than diligence in school matters.

At a meeting of teachers not long since the subject of modern instruction was brought up, and one of the professors remarked that he had never known a confirmed truant from school to amount to very much in the long run. Dull and slow-minded children may develop great ability later in life, but the child who, when young, learns to shirk lessons and deceive his parents and teachers, passing his time in idle and sensational talk and books, is likely to be a pronounced failure, even if he escapes such a thorough ingraining in crime that the penitentiary or the gallows does not at last claim him as legitimate prey.

◆

Good Company.—Shakespeare says: "It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught as men take disease, one of another; therefore, let men take heed of their company."

The Household Department of the New York Ledger.

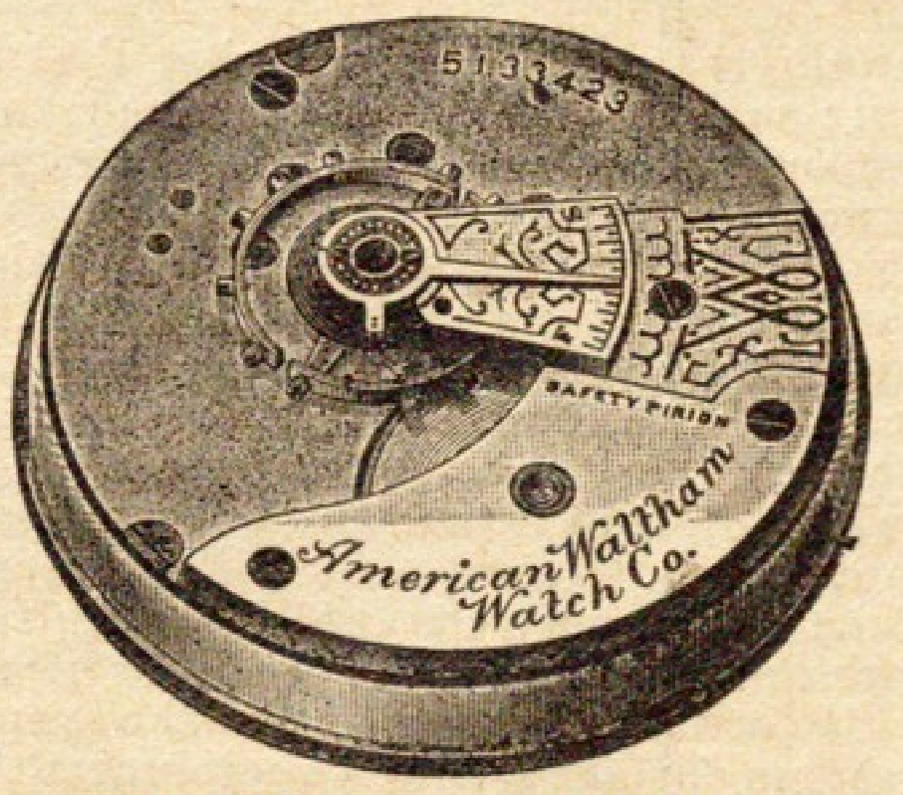
From time to time, when we can secure real bargains, we will offer them to the LEDGER readers in our Household Department. The following offer of watches suitable for every member of the family is a sample of the kind of bargains we will give our readers.

A FAMILY OFFER.

Cheaper Than Ever.

By reading this article, even those readers who do not want a first-class watch at any price will be interested in learning the phenomenally low prices at which the LEDGER can sell goods.

The *Ledger* will purchase for its subscribers Waltham and Elgin watches at the prices which jobbers charge the trade. Every one knows the excellence of these watches, and that they are the best in the world for anything like the money; but many are compelled to purchase foreign counterfeits simply because they cannot purchase the genuine without paying two or three prices. The *Ledger* has selected watches which represent the best value for the money of any watches yet made. The *Ledger* is the Great Family Paper, and it proposes to furnish watches suitable for every member of the families represented on its list of subscribers.



WATCHES FOR FATHERS.

Elgin or Waltham, Men's Size.

No. 99—$4.50.

No. 99 is a handsome Elgin or Waltham Watch, men's size. The works contain 7 jewels, compensation balance, safety pinion, stem winding and setting apparatus, and all the greatest improvements. The case is Open Face only, and is made of a composite that wears just like silver. The case is made by the Keystone Watch Case Co., and guaranteed in every respect. The case is made on the thin model plan.

Open Face Gold-Filled Watch, Men's Size.

No. 101—$9.85.

This is an Elgin or Waltham movement, open face, with beveled-glass crystal, warranted to wear like solid gold for fifteen years; stem wind and stem set, containing seven jewels, compensation balance, safety pinion, patent Breguet hair-spring hardened and tempered in form. This watch is a great bargain and a perfect timepiece. The case is handsomely engraved. We send this watch, delivery guaranteed, to any of our readers in this country for $9.85. Hunting Case, $3.00 extra.

No. 102—$13.50.

The American Watch Co., at Waltham, has made a reduction in the price of its 15-jewel movements. We take the first opportunity to give our readers the advantage of the new price list, and offer the following described bargains.

No. 102 is an open face, 15-jewel in settings, compensation balance, patent Breguet hair-spring hardened and tempered in form, white porcelain dial, stem wind and pendant, set in a gold-filled, engraved or engine-turned pattern case. Warranted to wear like solid gold for fifteen years. We will send this watch to any address, delivery guaranteed, for the sum of only $13.50. $3.00 extra for Hunting Case.

15-Jewel Open Face Silverene.

No. 103—$8.00.

No. 103 is a 15-jewel American Waltham Watch, either nickel or gilt movement, containing fifteen jewels in settings, compensation balance, patent Breguet hair-spring hardened and tempered in form, white porcelain dial, stem wind and pendant set. Either Roman or Arabic characters. It is in a solid nickel-silver, open face case, with a heavy French-beveled plate-glass crystal. We will send this watch to any of our readers, postpaid, delivery guaranteed, for only $8.00.

At this price for an accurate timepiece no one need be without a watch.

15-Jewel Open Face Gold-Filled Watch.

No. 104—$16.50.

No. 104 is a 15-jewel American Waltham, stem wind and set, compensation balance, patent Breguet hair-spring hardened and tempered in form, white porcelain dial. Either Roman or Arabic characters. Hands of blue-tempered steel. This movement comes in a 14kt. gold-filled case, guaranteed by the manufacturer to wear like solid gold for twenty years. We will send this watch, postpaid, delivery guaranteed, for $16.50.

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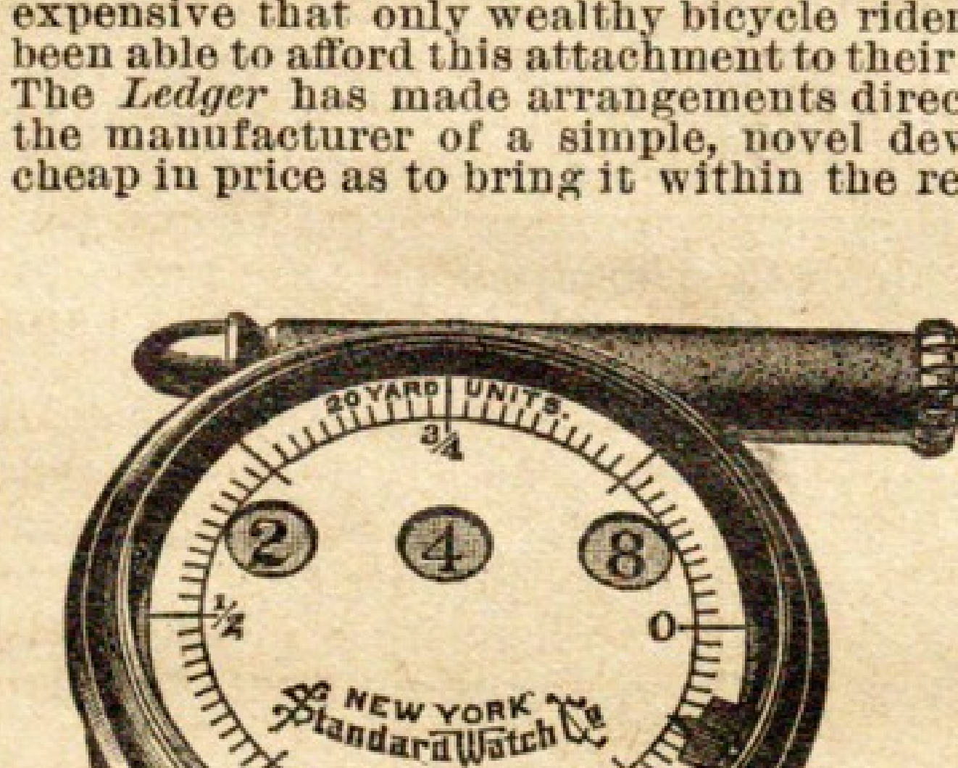
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THE SICKLE OF FIRE.*

BY CHARLES KELSEY GAINES.

CHAPTER I.

It is a fact not generally known, outside strictly scientific circles at least, that there exists an element (technically called hydropyrogen, symbol Hp) possessing qualities of such a nature that its more abundant production, or any recklessness in use, might imperil the human race. Happily, in its pure state, in which alone it is dangerous, this substance is very rare; indeed, only one specimen is now known to exist, and that is kept hermetically sealed in thick glass. Its name never appears in the ordinary text books—for prudential reasons.

There are more of these formidable secrets in the laboratories of our biologists and chemists than most people suspect. Few, until very recently, were aware that in a frail glass tube, not too scrupulously guarded, in the very heart of the great American metropolis, there are living, malignant germs of Asiatic cholera, which, if set free, might cause an epidemic that would cost millions of lives. And there are other things in that lockless cabinet quite as bad. There exist, also, poisons, the formulæ for which are never published, and explosives that no chemist dare compound save in the minutest quantities. Many of these things are altogether unknown to the ordinary student; only the well-tried specialist has knowledge of them.

But to return to hydropyrogen. It is obtained, but only with the greatest difficulty, from the smoke products of a certain kind of sea-weed. Even in this the element is not always present. Out of a hundred specimens incinerated and analyzed, ninety-nine would probably show no trace of it; and when it does occur, few are the chemists able to detect, much less separate it—a most fortunate circumstance.

Hydropyrogen, as developed from this sea-weed when burned under the action of an electric current (Tesla's) of the highest tension, is an almost impalpable gas—the lightest yet discovered. It diffuses rapidly, and easily permeates every known substance except indurated glass. When subjected to a process similar to that by which other gases are liquefied—a combination of tremendous pressure with extreme cold—it suddenly solidifies, falling in a heap of slender, needle-like crystals of a vivid ruby color. This experiment has been successfully carried through only three times. The crystals thus obtained may be preserved for almost any length of time, provided they are kept absolutely free from moisture; hence they are sealed in heavy tubes of indurated glass. In the darkness these crystals gleam with a fiery, quivering phosphorescence, comparable only to the shifting colors sometimes seen in the aurora borealis. Indeed, it is probably of the same essential nature, being caused by induced currents streaming through the vacuum tubes in which this unstable and intensely energetic agent is encased.

I have said that hydropyrogen is dangerous to the safety of the world. This is due to its extraordinary effect in decomposing and inflaming water. Not that it is difficult to decompose water; that is done every day by familiar processes. But there is no other agent which exhibits so terrible a potency; no other which so defies control.

Its action may be explained by a familiar illustration. A child sets on end a line of dominoes, separated by spaces of about an inch. He pushes over the nearest, and the whole line goes down with a swift crash, each unbalancing the next till all are fallen. Just so with a series of molecules; the dissolution of one breaks up those next adjacent, when once the action is started. Such is the operation of all explosives, and of many poisons—*e. g.*, snake venom. There seems to be scarcely any limit to the effect which may be produced by an infinitesimal portion of the disturbing agent, provided it has a continuous field of suitable material on which to act.

How fearful may be the effect of hydropyrogen if indiscreetly used, no living man can testify as I can. Why do I tell the story? Because some vague hints have already reached the public through certain Canadian papers; and if the matter is to be agitated at all, the warning lesson should be read in full.

It occurred only a few months ago. I had been studying for several years under Prof. O. D. McKazy, the discoverer of hydropyrogen, and the only man who has ever succeeded in producing the crystals. I had assisted him in his experiments—often a trying ordeal—and was deep in his confidence. We had already used the crystals on the contents of a large tank in an enclosed court with startling results. The professor now wished to experiment on a much larger scale—which could be done with safety only in an uninhabited region. He had heard of a small lake suitable for the purpose in British America, among the mountains near the Pacific coast; and thither we proceeded.

Our journey, though not without hardship, was accomplished without mischance. We encamped, with our Indian guides, about two miles from the lake, which we first visited by day to make sure of the trail. Then at night, leaving our Indians—whom we never saw afterward—we stole with feverish eagerness through the black darkness of the evergreens, and at last emerged on the ledges that overhung the lake.

It lay at some depths below, banked with cliffs on every side, reflecting the black sky and the sparkling stars. Nearly opposite a little white cascade drew a broad chalk-mark down the dusky wall, and we could faintly hear its chilly dashings. The place was like a well, and it was said to have no outlet.

Dropping upon our hands and knees, we crept out on a jutting bluff, and the professor tossed down a pebble. The splash shattered the reflected sky; then its stars returned, but waved and blinked as the ripples circled outward.

With great precaution the professor now broke the tube containing the crystals and hastily cast it down after the pebble. As it reached the surface, along with the splash a faint hiss was audible. For an instant fiery worms wriggled and darted about; then a little ruby cloud appeared in the water. It grew till it glowed like the sunset.

A seething sound was heard, and we perceived that the hue was caused by an infinitude of little fiery bubbles; and as they rose and burst, a pale-blue flame began to play above the water. Pale, but hot—horribly hot. We could feel its withering blast even where we stood. It mounted higher; it towered above us.

"Run! Run!" screamed the professor. And we ran as if hell had opened at our feet.

Even so, our delay had well nigh cost our lives. Breathless, scorched, shuddering, we reached the brow of the mountain. Here we lay flat, and, shielding our faces, peered back over the edge.

All the water was now red as sunshot wine; the whole lake was seething like a caldron. The rocky walls shone ruddy with the reflection—or, was it possible that they were growing red with the heat? The blue flames united from all parts of the surface, and rose to the sky in a tall, faint, wavering column, much like the flame of an alcohol lamp—but half a mile high.

And the heat—oh, the heat was blinding! Our flesh was blistered; the very hair upon our heads was crinkling, burning. Crazy with pain and terror we rolled down the slope, leaped, ran, plunged, fell and at last brought up in a deep ravine near the foot of the mountain, where a considerable stream gushed from a cavern. How cool and comforting its plashing seemed!

We now lay in the shadow of the hill; but just over our heads streamed the blue light and consuming ardor of that fiery column from which we had fled, glinting upon the rocks and withering the scanty vegetation for miles around. We saw acres of stunted evergreens below us, shrinking, crisping to tinder in that inordinate glow; then the dry needles sparkled, and here and there a tree spouted up a fountain of red flame. Soon the whole forest was ablaze beyond us, and our ravine was in shadow no longer.

Then we crept back into the cavern of the roaring stream, far under the mountain, finding precarious foothold by the margin of the water, till at last only a faint glow showed the opening by which we had entered. Here the rugged roof vaulted higher and was lost in darkness. We sank prone on a shelf of rock beside the gurgling torrent. The spray dashed over our aching limbs, and we found relief.

But the place was full of noises. Not merely the voice of the pouring waters that moaned and echoed everywhere. More and more frequent came rumblings, followed by a sound like heavy thunder, and a tremor as if the mountain shuddered to its roots. Doubtless the raging furnace above was cracking the cliffs that walled the lake; the overheated ledges were bursting.

I perspired under the raining spray; it seemed to me that the floor on which I lay was growing warmer. I laved my hand in the running water, but jerked it back with a cry; the stream was scalding hot. A ruddy sparkle seethed in its current; the vault above me was becoming faintly visible; as I gazed, the fantastic cavern dome grew rosy as the morning sky.

With a scream of terror I sprang toward the entrance; a great light flamed behind me; a strong gust of fire and wind swept me onward, till I found myself fallen on the bank of the ravine outside. A pale-blue blow-pipe flame went hissing past me. With it came shrieks of agony more terrible than all the groanings of the tormented hill—shrieks of human anguish—and a strange, ape-like figure was flung beside me and lay writhing. It was the professor, my friend, but seared and branded almost beyond recognition. His clothing was burned away; of his straggling locks and black, silky beard not a hair remained. His long arms twitched, and his slender fingers clutched the parched, crumbling moss as he lay in pain inexpressible. Thus science had rewarded her most gifted votary.

Yet even in that supreme moment he was not forgetful. "'Twas the outlet!" he gasped. "The ferment has worked through. Oh, Heaven! Run! Cut off the stream, or the world is lost."

CHAPTER II.

The situation was so tremendous that for an instant I could not grasp it. I stood motionless, as if I had not heard.

He sprang up and pushed me. In the anguish of his soul the torment of his body was forgotten.

"The sea!" he wailed. "O God—O God! Cut it off from the sea!"

He was an atheist, but he called upon God. Many times in that awful hour he called upon God. It was not profanity; it was the elemental cry of the human soul in its despair. It is the cry that will be heard on the Day of Judgment. It is the cry of the damned.

The Day of Judgment! It was upon us. The last trump had sounded; the earth was to be consumed, and its oceans would be as oil in that mighty conflagration.

I leaped down the ravine. Already the upper waters of the stream were burned away, and its bed was dry and hot. Yet such speed did I make in that mad, desperate race, that I almost overtook the fleeing torrent which flowed and flamed before me. Then suddenly my strength gave way, my limbs sank under me, and I fell like a stricken animal! For some moments I lay shrouded in deadly faintness, incapable of thought.

Then, with a wrench of effort, I sat up, giddy and weak. I found myself on the brink of a vast precipice—three steps more would have ended all—where the torrent had dropped its foaming waters through a sheer descent of more than a hundred feet.

But the torrent was gone. Only a little fire still dripped from the verge, and splashed in liquid flashes upon the rocks below. And the pale light and the searing heat no longer streamed down from the mountain, though the red crater that an hour before had held the glimmering lake cast up a lurid, volcanic glow against the sky.

Before me lay a broad, dusky landscape, sloping toward the sea, buried in mist and shadow. But through it ran a flicker of light, as the envenomed stream sped on its deadly mission toward the deep, breaking at intervals into cascades of incandescent brightness, and sending far down its current the ruddy, sparkling spume that marked the first decomposition of the waters. Nearer and nearer to the sea the fiery line was creeping, stretching itself along like a glowing earthworm.

And I, too, cried upon God in my extremity, for man was impotent and science vain. Science! Was it not the very life-blood of that red devil yonder, crawling on with unquenchable torch to make a molten ruin of the world? And I, that believed not in God, I also prayed to God and wept and prayed again.

In the midst of my crying I felt a touch, and clasped in my arms the limp body of my almost dying friend. Dying he surely was, yet even then his iron will—hardened by scientific training and ordeals such as ordinary men never dream of—so triumphed that, despite the intolerable suffering that dazed and blinded him, he had dragged himself down the rough gorge to see the end.

And the end was near. Already that distant tongue of vibrant flame was flicking at the margin of the sea. It was more than human nerves could bear. We shrieked out like men in nightmare terror. We shrieked and shrieked again, and could not cease, for the end of the world was *now*.

The envenomed spume darted out against the surf. Then a long white-crested wave rolled in and buried it from view. A tall column of steam shot up, so ruddy that at first it seemed a jet of fire; and a sound began to fill the air, as when white-hot steel is quenched in the ice-bath.

The professor sprang to his feet. He stood lifted upon his toes, every muscle tense; his breath came and went in shrill sighs. Disfigured, naked, in that weird light, he was like a devil-hunted soul fleeing from its place of torment; on his face a wild agony of hope, as if one might indeed escape from hell. He strove to speak, but the words gurgled like an obstructed brook. Then with supreme endeavor he trumpeted a cry: "The salt!" if I heard aright, for indeed it was hardly articulate, and he fell like a figure of stone.

Meanwhile, as the wave receded on the beach a change was visible. The red had vanished; a wash of luminous green flowed down the sand; the surf was shot with sparkles and flashes of still more vivid hue. Then the red waters of the stream again prevailed, and pressed far out in the brine. Gushes of colored light bubbled up from the depths, and all over the tossing surface fluttered flames of blue and green. It seemed as if the briny waters and the fresh were struggling for the mastery. Was it possible that the salt of the sea had power? I dared not think it.

The waters were now boiling with volcanic violence; the air above was thick with rolling clouds of rainbow-tinted vapor; the many-hued gleams and flashes playing under the waves lit up the bottom of the ocean far and near. So intense was the illumination that I could see the scaly glitter of the frightened fishes as they sped away on every side, and the black, slimy shapes of nameless monsters struggling in the scalding liquid.

O God of mercy! what would be the end? The strain was madness; the suspense was more than death. Was there, indeed, a God of power to save—or only this hideous demon of science, which man had evoked but could not quell?

I lifted my eyes to the black, unanswering heavens, and cried to the void above:

"O God—if Thou art God—oh! cast me down for my sin, with this raging fire, into the abyss of hell; but save the fair world created by Thy hand—its teeming cities and the millions that are sleeping—Thy children."

And at that moment I seemed to see all the peoples of the earth buried in slumber, the bride in the arms of her loved one, the mother beside her babe. And I saw, as in vision, a conflagration mounting above the clouds, streaming far into the airless space, sweeping on to the destruction of mankind.

The channel of the stream was now empty. The last crimson drops of ferment were drained into the deep. For an instant the surface darkened and the ebullition almost ceased. Then with an earthquake shudder, a blinding avalanche of liquid incandescence, the waters were lifted in a thousand fountains.

* * * * * *

I lay staring at the sky. Raindrops were falling on my face. It was very dark. Whether I had been stunned by a shock of the explosion, or whether human consciousness could no longer endure the strain, I do not know. Evidently some time had elapsed. My head was resting upon something cold and dead. I knew too well what it was. But at first I could not rise. My will was helpless; my body corpse-like. I tried to think, but sensation lapsed again.

At last I roused, and was able to turn a little. Slowly the power of sight came back to my glazed eyeballs. All the land was in shadow; the sea was dark and smooth. The virus of fire was quite burned out, the last spark extinguished in the quenching brine. The world was saved.

THE END.

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A GOLF SONG.

There never was a game like the old Scottish game
That's played 'twixt the hole and the tee;
You may roam the world o'er, but the game at your door
Is the very best game you'll see.

So I'll sing you a song—'twill be hearty and not long—
If kindly you'll listen to me,
Of tees, holes and clubs, of hazards and of rubs,
And whatever else in golf may be.

Of the tee, first of all—nor to*tum* nor to*tal*,
Nor that o'er which old wives agree—
Of earth, clay or sand, whatever is at hand,
Come quickly and make us our tee.

We get tee from the caddy—not a box but a laddie—
What though ragged and roguish he be;
The club's face he wipes; we go in for swipes;
And off fly the balls from the tee.

Away through the air in parabolas so rare
The balls fly beautifulie;
But O! woe betide! I've driven mine too wide,
And now I'm in jeopardie.

And here let me pause while the Muse the moral draws:
Of hopes that too highflying be,
That dare in the dark and overshoot the mark,
Golf teaches the penaltie.

In whins or in sand, in despair now I stand,
And the cleek swing dubiouslie;
Who would be a funker? I'm clear of the bunker,
And close to the hole, I see.

But all this time, in love with my rhyme,
I've forgotten mine enemie;
Alike now we lie, but how nettled am I—
The villain! he is dead, I see.

The putter in my hand, around me many stand,
The end of the game to see;
I borrow and I steal; my way I slowly feel—
Hurrah! the first half for me!

"Halved hole," says the foe; but "No!" I say—"No!
Putt it out, mine enemie!
You're dead, but not buried." He's shaky and flurried;
O! a terrible miss makes he.

And here I stop again, for the Muse I find is fain
To do more moralitie;
"There's many a slip, but ne'er withdraw the lip,
For nowhere is certaintie."

I wish that were true; but 'tis certain I and you
With short holes* won't well agree;
That soon, without a doubt, we'll all be holed out,
And life's round finished shall be.

But still while we may let us keep to the play,
That our days in the land long may be;
For headache, cold or cough there is nothing like golf;
So here's to it, three times three!

---

*The short holes are chiefly played at by old men.

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FUTURE OF THE SALVATION ARMY.

Leaving out of consideration altogether the strictly religious phase of the Salvation Army question, it would appear to a disinterested observer that a split in the ranks and a break-up in this great combination must of necessity be disastrous. There has been a good deal of discussion as to the causes that have led up to the present disaffection, but with that the present article has nothing to do. What it is desirable to dwell upon is their good work in many fields. They have fed the hungry, clothed the naked and comforted the sorrowing. They have opened the eyes of the blind to the light of Christianity, and brought smiles to faces where hitherto only sorrow and despair have left their traces.

It has been one of the most remarkable peculiarities of the work of the Salvation Army that no matter what the locality, regardless of environment, and in the face of what would have been certain destruction to women of almost any other class, the sisters of this band have gone into dens of vice, have faced criminals of the worst class, and have made their way, alone and unprotected, in darkness and in daylight, through portions of the town where strong men would scarcely dare to go unguarded. So well established has their good work become, and so familiar are their good deeds to the poor and down-trodden, as well as to the criminal and the lawless, that even depravity itself stands back with bowed head as they pass.

It is a melancholy spectacle, this quarrel among themselves, for it casts reproach on the cause and weakens its influence. While many object to its manners and methods, it is necessary for truth's sake to admit that it fills a place otherwise unoccupied. Its simple and unassuming piety carries conviction with it and makes believers of those who come to scoff. It has penetrated into dark and unfrequented places, where the light of the Gospel has rarely shed its healing rays.

Wrangling and contention are always to be regretted, especially in religious bodies, but it is doubly to be deplored when it does anything to decrease or destroy the only moral influence that is able to reach many of the darkest places in the darkest quarters of our great cities.

DOGS AS DETECTIVES.

The dreams of our childhood have been many times disturbed by visions of the terrible animals described in books like "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Fierce-looking hounds with long, pendulous lips from which blood and foam were dripping, bloodshot eyes, ears that almost swept the ground, and tongues that hung out over white, gleaming teeth, made up a frontage that has more than once roused us from our slumbers to indulge in the wildest shrieks and terror that for many hours refused to be allayed.

The bloodhound has gone the way of all the world. Although dogs are used to hunt convicts, they are by no means the ferocious creatures of our childish imagination. They are merely small fox-hounds, and are very common around the houses of Southern planters. It is the peculiar training of these dogs that makes them valuable, and to add to this, they do not mangle and tear the victim when once they overtake him, but hold him at bay until the officers, who are usually close at hand, come up with them. A small, light switch will keep them at the proper distance, but they never lose sight or scent of a victim once they get on his trail. It is a curious fact that, although they may rub their shoes over with odorous herbs, which, by the way, is a favorite method of trying to throw the dogs off the scent, the animals recognize this, and, holding their noses up from the ground, take scent from the shrubs and grass that may have brushed the garments of the runaway.

It is related of one man that, having gotten out of his prison, he set about a most ingenious plan of escape. He waded down a stream for some miles, then crossed and re-crossed the creek, and at last went back to where the gang with which he had been employed were working; then he either secured different shoes or rubbed his own with some strong-smelling compound. Having done this, he struck across the country, feeling confident that the dogs would lose the scent at the point where he had walked over the tracks of the gang and broken the scent by means of treating his shoes. But he made a poor calculation on the sagacity and keenness of these well-trained creatures. Although completely dressed in an outfit which he had stolen, they followed him for miles and came up with him on the sixth day of his outing. He was captured without injury or a scratch.

The training of these dogs is a work of art. They are taught to know nothing, see nothing and follow nothing but the trail of the man whose clothing they are given to start with. Day after day, night after night they keep on, and as long as the object of their pursuit keeps on the ground nothing can throw them off the scent.

A man who has had a great deal of experience in tracing criminals is training a number of these dogs for detective work in cities. He gives them the scent of a burglar, directing them to an open drawer or desk, or a broken casket, or any package that it seems evident they have handled. Then he takes these four-footed detectives out on the street with him, and they wander up and down the highways and byways where criminals are supposed to resort. On several occasions the dogs have pointed out persons upon whom, to all appearances, no shadow of suspicion rested. These people were kept under watch by the authorities, and after careful investigation the suspicions aroused by the actions of the dogs have been fully justified. As long as men will be dishonest and commit crime against person and property, just so long must every means be brought to bear to secure their detection and punishment, and for this purpose there are few more valuable assistants than a well-trained dog.

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COLLISIONS AND FOGS.

Speculative and curious people have had a good deal to say about the sequence of accidents to sea craft of various sorts in the vicinity of New York city. The great steamer *St. Paul* opened the campaign, as it were, with a grand spectacle. A number of minor accidents followed, then came a big storm, the weather-bureau lion that ushered in the month of March. Groping around in the thick fog, steamships and sailing craft and tows of various sorts bobbed about and bumped their noses together, congratulating themselves if they got off with whole ribs. The great *New York* followed the example of the *St. Paul* and ran into a sand-bar, where she stuck for hours, fortunately, however, getting off without much trouble; then *La Bourgogne* and the *Ailsa* collided, the Atlas steamer settling down until her smokestacks were just visible above the water line, and the affrighted passengers rushed into the rigging. The *Guyandotte* and the *George W. Clyde* crashed together, the *Guyandotte* having her sides stove in and being left in an almost helpless condition. The sailors on the *Ailsa* behaved in the most unseemly manner, according to all accounts, scrambling into the life-boats and pushing off, leaving the passengers to get away as best they could. The day's disasters were rounded up by the wrecks of a few smaller craft and some barges and flat-boats. All in all, it was said to be the most unfortunate period through which New York shipping has ever passed.

I MISS THEE IN THE VILLAGE CHOIR.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I miss thee in the village choir,
  My own dear Aveline, with thy voice
The sweetest, tenderest ever heard
  Where mortal tones rejoice
Over a Saviour's deathless love
That leadeth such as thee above.

Oh, agony! one whispered now
  That thou wert on a bed of pain,
And I might never hear that voice—
  Heart-purifying voice—again;
I cannot, will not think it so—
Too deep, too dark, too dread the woe!

Yet still if Heaven will claim its own,
  My angel gone before me! thou,
Wearing far Eden's fadeless wreath
  On thy all-radiant brow,
Wilt pray for one who loved thee so
In earth's tempestuous night below.

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TRAINING CIRCUS HORSES.

BY ANDREW T. SIBBALD.

When we visit a circus and find ourselves witnesses of the surprising intelligence manifested by the equine race, we have wondered at the patience and perseverance that it must have taken to train the animals. The horse, which justly claims our affectionate gratitude for the many additions he makes to our comfort, happiness and pleasure, is capable of much under the training hand of a kind and patient teacher, who must be likewise firm and masterly.

Trainers begin the education of a "green horse" when he is two years old. Should he be older, he will not be so tractable, but will probably sulk, go off his feed and lose condition. Some horses, like some men, can be taught nothing, while others are quickly impressible, and show great delight when brought into the training ring. As soon as the youngster is mouthed and lunged, his training in "tricks" commences. The trick-master must have unquestionable patience, perseverance and resolution, with a perfect command of his own temper, and quick perception of individual equine idiosyncrasies. Kindness and perseverance alone are successful.

At every forward step, however insignificant, the pupil is encouraged and rewarded with a few pieces of carrot, which the tutor carries in his pocket. An intelligent animal soon begins to guess what is required of him. He must never be punished should he make blunders. The tutor gently, firmly and kindly continues the practice in hand until the blunders are no longer committed, the instructor always keeping the mastery. If the horse turns sulky, the lesson must be persevered with till he comes out of his sulks; but if he is good and amiable, short and frequent lessons are the most effective, say, half an hour at a time, and, perhaps, eight or nine lessons in the day. A horse is never struck unless he proves vicious.

Spectators in a circus often wonder how the horse has the intimation of what he is desired to do. The most careful watching may fail to detect the "cue," if one does not know what the "cue" is, but nevertheless it is always given, and by it alone the horse is directed in his performance, and his concentrated attention when in the ring is easily discernible. The professional phrase is "giving the office." In teaching, the "office" is given by touching the horse sharply on particular parts with a light whip. The general "offices" are, for marching, to touch the horse on the front part of the shoulder, on the off or near side, according to what leg he is to march with; the "office" for crawling is a touch under the belly; for lying down, a tap between the knees, and so on. There are many other "offices," according to the taste of the individual trainer, who must, in the course of training many animals, discover idiosyncrasies and accidental intelligence, which, if he have the necessary tact himself, he can make available. A complicated trick, such as firing off a pistol, takes a long time to teach, and should the animal take fright at the sudden noise, he will never be able to accomplish it. The horse has a remarkable memory. When a step in his instruction is once acquired, he never forgets it; and even if he should not be called upon to practice it for years, a very small effort is sufficient to recall it, and he will be as expert as ever at it.

The office of trick-master is a branch profession of the circus, the same teacher seldom undertaking to teach "trick" and "ring" horses; likewise all "trick horses" are not "ring horses," and comparatively few "ring horses" are "trick horses."

The "ring horse" does not require so much intelligence as the "trick horse;" his qualifications must be steadiness of nerve and tolerable sagacity. The first lesson consists in walking round, to enable the animal to overcome the giddiness which affects men and horses alike on their first entry into the ring. Some are wholly unable to conquer it, however they try. A giddy horse staggers, and ends by rolling over the edge of the ring.

After the animal has "felt the ring," as it is called, the lessons in cantering begin. The horse is taught to strike off with the inner legs to whichever hand he is working. If he cannot be relied on to do this, he is not safe for a single round. It is very difficult to train a horse to canter courageously under objects held close above him. The object is to get the horse to that slow, collected, equable canter which is an artificial pace, but indispensable for circus work, so that he may not yield to the impulse to stop dead or to swerve while the acrobat is expected to jump over banners or to crash through paper globes and alight once more on the horse cantering placidly below.

A horse comes into the ring full two months before the acrobat mounts him. Some time elapses before the horse adapts himself to the lateral sway which comes from the heightened center of gravity in the rider standing on a pad instead of sitting on a saddle. In professional phrase, the artist "rolls the horse;" but the horse generally acquires a compensatory style of carrying himself and his burden.

With "trick" and "ring" horses alike, when they "come out" their education does not cease, neither does it ever do so until their life closes. The circus horse, when out of his apprenticeship, acquires the suggestive title of "improver."

Circus horses are carefully kept and nurtured—witness their docility; and some of their feats, with those of their riders, are pieces of exquisite grace and agility, while others are revolting when they point at torture endured to obtain perfection, the effect of which, on the amiable and well-disposed, can never be desirable.

Horses of rare and eccentric marking were first adopted in circus work by the elder Astley. The circus proprietors have agents all over the country, picking up horses suited to their needs, with remarkable "spots" or markings. In England, Norfolk and Suffolk produce the greatest number of spotted horses, the peculiarity of color, in those counties, being inherited from two stallions, Spot Harlequin and Leopard. The leading circus proprietors, however, breed their own horses, and they, by careful study and attention, have brought the color and markings of the horses produced in their studs to scientific perfection.

It is found that a union between a black and a gray gives either a black spot or a piebald; the offspring of a gray and a bay is generally skewbald or a red spot.

Marked horses are so rare that they fetch a high price. In England a young horse, of an ordinary color, for which one hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars would be a reasonable price, fetches readily two hundred and fifty to three hundred dollars, if his markings make him an eligible circus horse.

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JOINING THE CIRCUS.

The ambitious small boy who thinks it would be great fun to join the circus ought to be provided with a copy of the rules and regulations which the would-be employees are required to sign in case of their engagement with one of the leading circuses of the country. It would be difficult to imagine anything more iron-clad than such a contract. The applicant is circumscribed in manners, methods, aspirations and ambitions, being obligated to all intents and purposes to bestow his entire time, talents, hopes and general entirety for the benefit of the grand aggregation. Even a little harmless flirtation is looked upon with suspicion, and as for staying out o' nights or conducting himself in any reckless or questionable fashion, it isn't even to be thought of; from all of which it would appear that the greatest moral show on earth intends to make the morality of *attachés* and employees one of its leading features, and to observe in fact the name of "moral" in its general *personnel* as well as in its ring performances.

The road to the circus is not always a pleasant one to travel. Gold and spangles are alluring, but they often cover sore hearts and weary bodies. In entering upon these duties, the incumbent binds himself to unswerving obedience to orders, and must neither make a demand for extra compensation nor must he object to figuring in all sorts of processions and parades, nor to doing the work of a general utility man.

Of course, the stars are exempt from such duties, but the rank and file have a hard life of it, and yet the country is full of young people who are just crying for a chance to join the circus.

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"IONIE, THE PRIDE OF THE MILL."

We republish in this number of the *Ledger* Miss Laura Jean Libbey's popular story, "Ionie, the Pride of the Mill," because we have been requested by many of our readers to do so. We are constantly receiving requests to republish some of our old popular stories, but we always hesitate to do so, until the demand becomes so urgent that we feel sure we are satisfying the majority in publishing the story asked for. We are always pleased to hear from old readers, and in so far as our space will permit, we will be pleased to comply with their requests.

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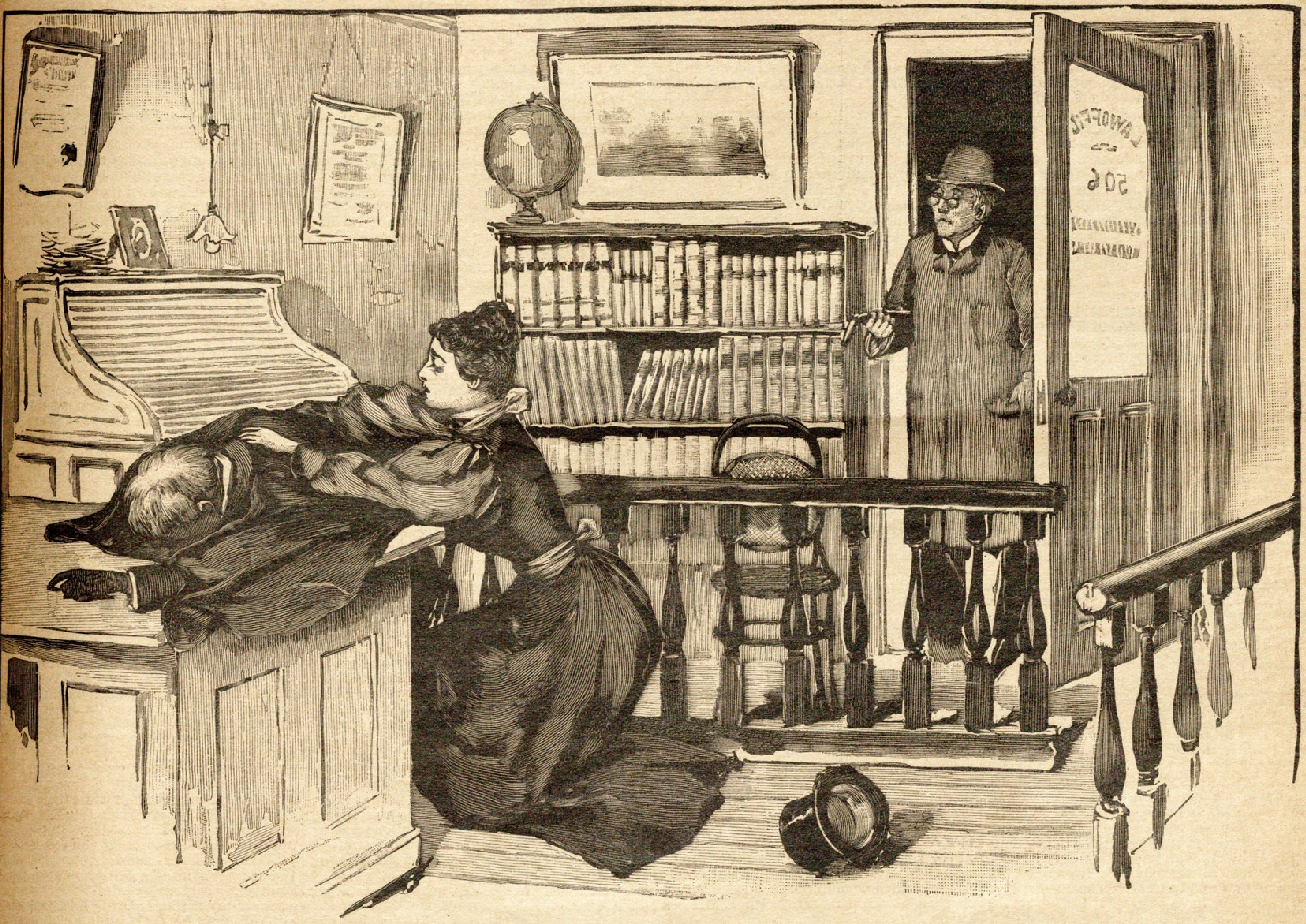

JUST THEN MR. THORNTON CAME IN.

EMMETT'S GIRL.[*]

BY SEWARD W. HOPKINS,

Author of "In the China Sea," "Two Gentlemen of Hawaii," "Darby, the Bear-Hunter of Alaska," etc.

["EMMETT'S GIRL" was commenced in No. 8. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the News-dealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS.

[In order that *new* readers of the *Ledger* may begin with the following installment of this story, and understand it just the same as though they had read it all from the beginning, we here give a synopsis of that portion of it which has already been published: Grace Emmett, a beautiful young typewriter, and Amy Wattleson, the younger daughter of James Wattleson, a rich old widower, love George Ellington, the young bookkeeper of the New York banking firm of Hildreth & Son. Amy's arts prove successful, and when Ellington asks Mr. Wattleson for Amy's hand he is stoutly refused because of his limited means. Amy tells her father that she will marry Ellington with or without his consent, and he threatens to disinherit her. The lovers meet at a ball given by Mrs. Dumphrey in her Madison Avenue mansion, and while they are alone in the conservatory Amy imparts to Ellington a plan she has conceived. Portions of their conversation are overheard by Gideon Welles, a cunning meddler of small income and increasing debts, who expects to marry money in the person of Amy's elder sister, Helen, who detests him. He hears Amy say that her father had that day drawn ninety thousand dollars in cash from Hildreth's bank. Next morning Mrs. Kent, Wattleson's widowed sister and housekeeper, finds her brother murdered in his bed and his secretary rifled, and Amy is missing. Detective Tubbs finds a gold stud on the bed beside the body, and Helen recognizes this as one of a set of three she had given to her brother Tom, who, having been cast off by his father seven years before, had enlisted in the army and is stationed on Governor's Island. Tom is arrested. Ellington and Amy, after the ball, go to Trenton, New Jersey, where they are married, and soon after arrested on the charge of murder and robbery.

Gideon Welles offers his assistance as a detective, and while he is going over the premises he arouses the suspicion of Detective Tubbs, who thinks he is searching for something which he would not like anybody else to find. Old Hildreth and Ellington's father desire to engage the services of Thornton & Ormsby, criminal lawyers, the employers of Grace Emmett. Tom, who was in New York on leave of absence on the night of the murder, tells Colonel Topleigh, his superior officer and the brother of Mrs. Dumphrey, that he would rather die than disclose his whereabouts at the time the murder was committed, because it would compromise the fair name and betray the confidence of a a beautiful woman who loves him. He says he sold the studs given him by his sister to George Ellington. As this statement is corroborated by Ellington at the preliminary examination, Tom is discharged and Ellington is held for trial. He claims that he bought the studs because Tom was in need of money, but that he had never worn them; he had placed them in a drawer, and when afterward he looked for them they were missing. His friends desert him; even his wife turns her back upon him. Gideon Welles, however, professes a belief in his innocence. Another evidence against him at his trial is the disappearance from his desk at the bank of the memorandum of the numbers on the bank-notes drawn by the murdered man. The jury finds him guilty of murder in the first degree.]

CHAPTER XIV.

HOPE.

"IT cannot be true! Oh, tell me, Mr. Ormsby, this is not—it cannot be—the last hope?"

Lawyer Ormsby looked sorrowfully at the weeping old man who had come to him in distress, to learn if nothing more could be done for his unfortunate boy.

"Mr. Ellington," he said, speaking earnestly, "this is the saddest case I have ever had decided against me. I felt sure of success—I did, believe me. The evidence against George, your son, was, in my estimation, quite inadequate to a conviction. Purely circumstantial, all of it. There is as strong a suspicion of the guilt of at least two other persons as of your son's. These are Welles and Wattleson."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Ellington, wringing his hands, "that is all true enough; but what good does it do me now to know that? Is it possible, I ask—oh, God, is it possible—that my son, whom I love, who has supported me and cherished me in my declining years, must die for the evil deed of another? Another, I say, for as sure as God rules, my boy is innocent. He was a good boy, Mr. Ormsby. Not a weak, snivelling fellow, but a strong, healthy-minded man. Ah, it—it—"

Here the poor old man broke down and sobbed bitterly.

"Is there absolutely no hope?" he asked, after a pause.

"Mr. Ellington," said Ormsby, "this is a most trying time. I do not wish to build up any false hope in your heart, nor do I wish you to give way to utter despair. There is a hope—a slight one. I have moved for a new trial. If that is granted, we may succeed in breaking down the evidence of the prosecution, and perhaps in strengthening our own. If I could learn who the person was with whom Mr. Wattleson had that business engagement that required the use of ninety thousand dollars, I fancy we could find some new light that would lead us out of the abyss of darkness we are in now."

"Why does he not come forward?" cried Mr. Ellington. "Is he a cowardly brute that he hides himself, and allows my poor son to go to a felon's doom, when a word from him might change it? Ah, it is too cruel! Too cruel!"

"I expect an answer to my motion for a new trial to-morrow," said Ormsby. "If I fail to get that, we—we—"

"Yes—yes—I understand," groaned Mr. Ellington.

"The Governor might be induced to interfere—to save George's life!"

"Yes, and leave him covered with infamy, a prisoner for life. A young man like that, Ormsby, a noble, high-minded fellow, sentenced to death or imprisonment! Oh, it is too horrible! Unjust! Unjust!"

"The testimony of Hildreth, more than any other one thing, tended to convict him," said Ormsby. "Hildreth showed so conclusively that George would know about the money; and then the destruction of the memorandum hurt us. You see how it was with the jury. They could only look at it from the other side. They could not take into consideration the noble qualities of your son before he did—before this trial began. At least, they would not. But there, do not despair. Let us hope for a new trial and better results."

"You say it was Hildreth's testimony that convicted George. Do you think if I saw Hildreth—if I appealed to him as an old friend—as a merciful man—that I could get him—that I could do anything?"

"Well, you might," replied Ormsby. "You might get him to go into the matter a little deeper than he has, and perhaps his memory might be brushed up and new facts discovered—the memorandum may have been found—any little thing in the way of new and favorable evidence."

"Yes, yes, I understand. And the Wattlesons? Would you appeal to them?"

"I don't see how it could do any good," replied the lawyer. "You see the Wattlesons made no direct charge against George. It was the police. Nothing in the Wattleson testimony—from the house—injured George, except the fact that he eloped. The matter of the purchase of the studs from Tom Wattleson and the loss of them afterward was bad, but that alone would not have convicted him."

"I'll see Hildreth," said Mr. Ellington. "I'll see everybody. I'll see the police, and try to rouse them into action, and find the man you want—the person to whom the money was to be paid."

"That's the man we want," said Ormsby. "If I could have a crack at him, I fancy I could change things some."

Mr. Ellington, tottering under the weight of his age and his sorrow, left Ormsby, and went to see Banker Hildreth.

"My poor, poor old friend!" said Mr. Hildreth, when the bent old man came in, "I feel for you. I—I—"

"Oh, Hildreth!" cried Mr. Ellington, sinking into a chair and throwing his head down into his hands, the picture of utter and desolating despair. "Oh, Hildreth!"

The cry reached the banker's heart. He wiped a tear from his cheek, and laid a caressing hand on the bowed white head.

"My poor friend!" he said. "My poor, poor friend!"

"Oh, Hildreth!" cried Mr. Ellington again. "You—you—"

Then, overcome by his great anguish, he cried again in the accents of despair: "Oh, Hildreth!"

The banker rose from his chair and strode to and fro in his office, greatly agitated.

"Come, my friend," he said, gathering himself by an effort and speaking calmly, "you must not give way like this. You will kill yourself."

"Well," sobbed Mr. Ellington, in a hopeless tone, "if George—"

Then, suddenly fired by a new energy, he jumped to his feet and grasped Mr. Hildreth's hand.

"Kill myself!" he said. "Hildreth, how many years have I to live at best? How many have you? That boy, who has been unjustly condemned, largely by the instrumentality of your own testimony, had more years of noble usefulness before him than you and I together. Yet there he is, Hildreth—there he is, my son, your faithful employee, an honest man, as you know, before God Almighty, behind iron bars, waiting for the signal to his executioner. What think you of it, Hildreth? What think you of *his* death, if you are solicitous about mine? Ah, I cannot expect you to feel as I feel! But how would you feel, Hildreth, if your own son, who is your partner, your confidant, your companion, was in like position? Would you care for life? Life? Life for me? If this unholy—this shameful thing is allowed to be done, there is no life for me. Existence on this earth would be

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death—aye! worse than death. It would be hell."

Then, overcome by his emotions, and the nervous tension he had been under, he sank back weakly into his chair.

"My poor Ellington! My dear old friend!" said Mr. Hildreth. "I cannot stand it to have you go on like this. You must be calm. There is a higher Power than we who directs these things. It is all in His hands."

"No. *It is not.* Don't talk to me of a higher power, when it lies inactive and allows the forces of hell full sway upon earth. *Is* there a higher power than an unjust verdict? Is God merciful? Ah, it is not mercy I want, it is justice! Give my boy justice, and he will stand here before us all—before the world—before his God—as innocent as you or I."

Mr. Hildreth was silent.

"You don't believe it," said Mr. Ellington. "You, who took me to Thornton and Ormsby; you who promised to stand by me—by my boy; you who professed the utmost faith in his innocence—in his integrity—turn away—condemn him. Ah!"

The bitterness of the cry wrung tears from the eyes of the banker. Yet he was silent.

"It is so," continued Mr. Ellington. "You do not deny it. Your testimony at the trial proves it. You have changed. You have lost faith in George. You condemn him. Why? Because a bit of paper is lost? Because he bought a set of studs to help a friend and lost them? These two things, Hildreth, that might happen a thousand times and never be thought of, are sending my boy to his death."

Mr. Hildreth shifted nervously in his chair.

"I have just left Ormsby," continued Mr. Ellington. "He tells me he has moved for a new trial. He hopes to strengthen our side—to break down the testimony of the prosecution. *You* strengthened that testimony, Hildreth. It was you who sent my poor boy to his doom with your testimony about the numbers. Think of it! A bit of paper! And you sent my boy away to his death. A bit of paper! Oh, God!"

"My dear, dear Ellington!"

"Think of it, Hildreth! *Think of it!* That boy who has been my loving companion since his mother died—oh, thank God she died before this came upon us!—my boy who has been my guide and my staff in the evening of my life, convicted of murder! Hildreth, can you realize it? From a life of unwavering rectitude day after day, year after year, to a sudden condemnation for two of the most hideous crimes on earth! Your testimony, Hildreth, was what did it. Ormsby says the studs wouldn't have done it alone."

Mr. Hildreth covered his face with his hands.

"My God! My God!" he groaned.

"Are you sure you were right, Hildreth?" asked Mr. Ellington. "*Are you sure there was such a paper?* Might it not be possible that, after all, the memorandum was not taken—that it was never in existence—and therefore could not have been lost—or stolen?"

"Quite impossible," said Mr. Hildreth, softly.

"Impossible? Impossible? Yes, everything is impossible but injustice. *That* is never impossible. It is the easiest thing in the world. A crime is committed. The honor of the police department demands a criminal to fit the crime. They fail to find the actual criminal, and they make one. It's been done before, Hildreth, and it's being done now. A victim to prove the efficiency of the police. In order that the honor and fame of the sleuthhounds of the law shall remain untarnished, an innocent boy is sent to a felon's death. Death, Hildreth! Can you realize it? Not a death in his home, with these old but loving hands to tend him and wait upon him, and smooth the pillow under his head. Not a death surrounded by friends, his soul at peace with God, and resigned to the call of the Infinite. No! But a death like that of a butchered steer, a wild beast run down and slaughtered, with unsympathizing men standing about, writing down how he looks, how he feels, how he acts, when the deadly current is turned on. A death like that, Hildreth! A burned, scarred body—the disgraced grave—oh, Hildreth! And your testimony did it."

The banker sat with bowed head.

"Your testimony did it, Hildreth. And yet you had faith in George. You said you had. Why have you lost it? Was it because he bought the studs? Has that turned you?"

Mr. Hildreth passed his hand over his eyes with an uneasy, painful gesture.

"This is hard," he groaned.

"Is it hard for you, Hildreth?" asked Mr. Ellington. "Is it *hard* for you? Then what do you think it is for me? And what do you think it is for *him?* Ah, if that is the word for you, what can express what *I* feel?"

"I know! I know!" said Mr. Hildreth.

"You don't know. No one could know until he felt the horror. If you *did* know, you would say you would help me if Ormsby gets a new trial."

The banker sat a moment in dead silence. Then, rising slowly from his chair, he said:

"Sit here, Ellington, until I come back," and went outside to the counting room. He stepped to the cashier's desk.

"Mr. Clarke," he said, "is there any possibility—the *least* possibility, I say—that the memorandum of the Wattleson bills was not made, and, therefore, never stolen?"

The cashier shook his head.

"Impossible," he said. "I recollect seeing it myself."

"But—but—if it could have been a mistake of ours, Clarke—of yours or mine? If you did *not* see it? If there was no memorandum?"

Mr. Hildreth spoke in excited but hushed tones. Mr. Clarke looked at him wonderingly.

"I don't exactly catch your meaning, Mr. Hildreth," he said. "You know I never make such mistakes."

"No. I know it. I wish you did. I mean, I wish you had in this case. *Didn't you now?*"

Mr. Clarke opened his eyes.

"I mean," said Mr. Hildreth, "if such was the case, it would help me. You liked Ellington, Clarke?"

"Yes, and what's more, I like him yet. I cannot bring myself to believe that he ever committed that murder."

"You think him innocent, Clarke?"

"I certainly do, sir."

"My testimony convicted him, Clarke. It was that accursed memorandum. I hated to do it. It wrung my very soul. But it was the truth, Clarke—at least, I thought it was. Oh, was I mistaken, Clarke—could I be mistaken—could you *prove* me to have been mistaken? There may be a new trial, you know. If Ormsby, for the defense, could shake the evidence of the prosecution, Ellington might get off. If I could only be proven in the wrong, Clarke! You were not at the trial? Suppose you should be called at the second trial?"

"I begin to see," said the cashier, a slight smile breaking over his face. "New evidence. Let me think."

He walked around a few minutes, his brow furrowed, his lips quivering.

"I'll do it, Mr. Hildreth," he said. "Ellington's too good a fellow to be allowed to die like that, when there are grave doubts of his guilt! I—I—begin to think now that we were mistaken—that—that—we sometimes neglect to make a memorandum—don't take it, you know—and that this was one of the times."

"God bless you, Clarke," said Mr. Hildreth, and, giving the cashier's hand a quick, violent grip, he hurried back to Mr. Ellington. "My dear old friend," he said, "I've just had a talk with Clarke, our cashier. He admits that possibly—in short, he is quite sure—I made a mistake in my testimony. He is quite pleased to be able to prove that his employer sometimes makes mistakes. He says that sometimes we do not take such memorandum, and he believes that such was the case with Wattleson's money."

Mr. Ellington sat staring at the smiling, impenetrable face of the banker in a dazed sort of way. Now that what he had come for was his, he could not realize—could not grasp the fact.

"You say—you will go on—and admit that it was a mistake—that my George did not steal the paper?" he faltered.

"That's what I say," said Mr. Hildreth, "and Clarke will go on and swear to the same thing."

Mr. Ellington seized both the hands of the banker in his and held them tight.

"Hildreth," he said, with trembling voice, "you—you—I can't thank you now. Some day—when I am calm—when this is all over—I'll be able to tell you how much you've done for me to-day. I'll go now. I must see Ormsby at once."

The old form did not totter now, and, buoyed up by renewed hope, the feeble old legs took the anxious man back to the lawyer's office. It was locked.

"To-morrow," he said, turning away. "I'll come to-morrow."

CHAPTER XV.

"ALL IS LOST."

Lawyer Ormsby sat in his private office looking over some documents, and Grace Emmett sat at her table wading through a mass of accumulated work, for Grace had been so much affected by the result of Ellington's trial that for three days she had not been at the office. Grace's face, though still beautiful, was pale and haggard. Her eyes were red and swollen with much weeping, and her hands trembled, as she took up, one after another, the letters and documents her employer had laid on the table to be copied.

Ormsby's face, as he sat in his office, was gloomy and thoughtful.

While he sat there, Mr. Ellington came in. The old gentleman's face was eager and flushed. He rushed up to Ormsby and grasped his hands. Ormsby looked up in surprise.

"It's done, Ormsby, it's done!" said Mr. Ellington, joyfully. "I saw Hildreth yesterday, after I left you, and he admits there was a mistake—that the memorandum never was made—that George could not have taken it, because it was not there. Hildreth and Clarke, his cashier, are both willing to go on the stand in the new trial and testify to this. My boy is saved, Ormsby!"

Ormsby started up from his chair, an eager, delighted look on his face. Then, suddenly changing, as if overcome by a recollection, he sank back into his chair and a shade of sadness came over his face.

Mr. Ellington, whose senses were now abnormally acute, caught the discouraged look.

"What is it, Ormsby?" he asked. "Did you not say that Hildreth's testimony convicted George, and that if I could get him to change it, the new trial might set George free?"

"Yes," replied Ormsby, hoarsely, "I said that. But it is too late."

"Too late! Too late! What do you mean?"

"The motion for a new trial has been denied. I've just got the—"

"Denied? Denied? The motion—for a new trial—denied! Oh, Ormsby! What does that mean? Does that mean—does it mean—that all is lost?"

"Yes," whispered Ormsby, unable to look at the thin, writhing lips of the old man. "Yes—unless the Governor interferes."

"Oh!"

Mr. Ellington uttered a cry as if he had been struck. Everything seemed dark to him. He placed his hands to his head and reeled. Ormsby did not see his distress, for he had his own face buried in his hands. But he felt it.

Mr. Ellington turned to the door and blindly groped his way out. The door closed behind him, leaving Ormsby silent and depressed. Grace, hearing the sound of the door, turned, and saw the old man tottering forth, his eyes wild and staring, and his face working with emotion. Her own heart gave a violent throb, and a rush of blood to her face made it red. She rose and sped to him, and with her white but strong, young hands she seized his arms.

"What is it, Mr. Ellington?" she asked. "Is there hope?"

"No," he hoarsely answered. "All is lost! Poor George! Poor George! Oh, what a world of cruel injustice!"

"Tell me," she said, "is the motion for a new trial denied?"

"Yes!" And then the flood-gates burst, and he sank down in her own chair, and threw his arms across the table and laid his head upon them in the very abandonment of despair.

She stood, her eyes blinded by tears, with one fair hand resting on the aged head.

"Oh!" he cried. "Have we not one friend left?" And the weary old frame heaved and trembled as the load of grief welled upward and seemed to overwhelm him.

"Poor George!" he cried. "Condemned to die! He who had hundreds of friends has not one now; not a friendly hand, save these old, tired ones of mine. Not a heart that beats for him, save this one in my breast, that will not beat much longer."

The plump, warm arms of the beautiful girl stole round his neck, and she sank on her knees at his side.

"Yes, yes!" she cried, now blending her tears with his. "There is one."

"No, no! He married, it is true, but she proved to be cold, cruel, selfish. She believes him guilty. She turned against him. Ah, what a cold heart!"

"But there is another," cried Grace. "It cannot be a sin to confess it now. Why should I care if others hear me and condemn me? *His* condemnation was unjust. Would to God that I could bear it with him. You are not alone, Mr. Ellington. I love—I believe in George."

He turned and looked at the piteous, tearful, sympathetic face upturned to his.

"You—you loved my George?"

For answer she placed her soft white cheek to his, and broke out afresh in violent sobs.

"Thank God!" he said. "Thank God there is one. You—you loved him—and he married *her!* Ah, he did not know! He could not have known. Oh, why didn't he know? Then this fate would not have overtaken him, and we would be happy together—we three. Ah! Too late! Too late!"

Just then Mr. Thornton came in.

"Here!" he said. "What's the matter?"

"Mr. Ellington, sir," she said.

"What's come over him? Has Ormsby heard—"

"Been denied, sir."

"The deuce! That's hard. But this poor man must be got home. Where is Ormsby?"

Grace motioned toward the door. Mr. Thornton started toward it. Grace stepped to him and stopped him.

"Let me go," she said pleadingly. "I'll take him home."

The lawyer looked at her in surprise.

"You? Bless me! you've been crying, too. Sympathy, eh? But you can't manage him."

"Indeed I can, sir. He needs a woman's care."

"Well, well, have your own way. Only don't cry those pretty eyes out. Here—here's money. Get a carriage and take the old gentleman safely home."

Under the gentle pleadings of Grace, Mr. Ellington allowed himself to be led to the street. Grace soon had a carriage, and ordered the driver to take them to Mr. Ellington's address.

The old gentleman was silent most of the way. Now and then he would break out in a torrent of grief, and then Grace would entwine her arms around him, and soothe him with tender words of love and sympathy.

Having reached his flat, she helped him upstairs, and they were met in the hall by the housekeeper.

Mr. Ellington suffered himself to be led into the parlor, and he sank down in a sort of stupor in the large easy-chair George had given him.

Together these two women—one old and faithful, the other young, lovely and sorrow-stricken—hung over him and nursed him until his grief was somewhat assuaged and he went to bed.

Before he left her he took Grace's hand in his, and, bending over her, kissed her.

"You are a good girl," he said. "I wish it had been you. I would like to call you daughter. Will you come again?"

"I will come often, Mr. Ellington," she said. "I will. I will be a daughter to you—in the place—of—"

Unable to say more, she pressed his hand, and her scalding tears fell upon it.

"Take good care of him," she said to the housekeeper.

True to her word, she came, and, like a ministering angel, she brought sunshine into the sick chamber, and her soft touch and noiseless footsteps were the admiration of Doctor Atherton, who had come to the house in response to her own request.

"He needs you," said the physician. "We cannot save him, but a nurse like you can smooth his way. I am sorry, but the old man will not be here long."

Day after day passed, and Mr. Ellington grew weaker and needed constant care. Grace, by permission of Mr. Thornton, dropped her office duties and remained constantly by the dying man. Amy, his son's wife, who should have been there, did not once come near.

At last came the day upon which Ellington was to be taken to Sing Sing. The dread sentence of death had been passed upon him, and the day had come for him to be removed from the Tombs prison to the "Death Watch" at Sing Sing, to await the fatal day.

There were but two to bid him farewell. These were Lawyer Ormsby and Gideon Welles.

Mr. Ellington was not informed of the change. Doctor Atherton had forbidden any conversation about George. And, indeed, the old man was too weak to fully understand. Grace knew, and longed to go and bid the man she loved farewell; but a sense of propriety bade her stay away, and she kept her faithful vigil by the father's side, with her eyes full of tears for the unfortunate son.

Ormsby and Welles met at the Tombs, and the lawyer's heart throbbed with pity when he saw the face of the man who was so near death light up with hope when he saw them.

"Is there anything new?" he asked, eagerly.

"No, George," said Ormsby, softly.

"All hope is lost?"

"*All* hope is never lost while there is life," replied Ormsby evasively. "You are to be taken to Sing Sing to-day. But we shall not relax our efforts to set you free."

Ellington shook his head. He saw through the lawyer's kind attempt to keep up his courage.

"Does my father know?" he asked.

"No. Your father is old, and has not been well, and the doctor in charge thought it wise not to tell him."

"Perhaps it is better so," said Ellington.

The turnkeys came now, and an officer, to whom Ellington was to be handcuffed. The irons were locked on Ellington's right wrist and on officer Bender's left. Thus manacled, the prisoner shook hands with Welles and Ormsby, uttered a last good-bye, and was led away.

It was then nearly seven o'clock.

An hour later, Mr. Gideon Welles stood on the corner of Fourteenth Street and Third Avenue, swinging his cane and looking this way and that, apparently undecided what to do with himself. Time hung heavy on his hands, and he had about made up his mind to go to a theatre for amusement.

The night was dark and threatening overhead, but the electric lights made the street bright and cheerful.

Crowds of gayly dressed people passed him, gay carriages rolled ceaselessly over the pavement, the clatter of the wheels and the horses' hoofs mingling with the clanging of the gongs on the Third Avenue cable-cars, the roar of the elevated overhead and the jingling bells of the crosstown lines.

Suddenly, above the usual sounds came the shrill cry of a newsboy:

"Axtry! Axtry! *Evenin' Telegram!* Full 'count of the turrable accident! Twenty lives lost! Engines telescoped! Cars burnin'! Axtry! Axtry! Only two cents!"

Gideon turned as the boy came near him, and mechanically held out his hand for a paper, while with the other he felt in his pocket for two cents to pay for it.

Opening his paper, he turned to the column headed in great, black letters: "Collision! Death! Twenty Lives Lost in a Smash-up at Hastings-on-Hudson!"

Following this came a long account of how the train, leaving the Grand Central Depot at 7:30 P. M., was met at Hastings by a southbound freight, which, by a misplaced switch, had been thrown onto the upbound track, and had collided with the passenger train. A terrible tale of death and disaster—bodies burning—identification impossible—the moans of the dying—and the efforts of the survivors to help the unfortunate.

All this Gideon read without displaying any emotion. Suddenly, however, he slapped his hand against the paper, and exclaimed:

"By Jove! That's the train that Ellington was to be taken to Sing Sing on. Maybe he's killed!"

Acting on the impulse of the moment, he rushed up the stairs of the elevated station, and was soon on the way to Forty-second Street.

Reaching there he changed cars for the depot, and was inside the waiting-room three minutes later. Here he found a crowd of reporters and others, eagerly hunting for details of the disaster.

As Gideon rushed to and fro, he ran plump into Gerald Ormsby.

"Hello!" he said. "Have you heard anything about Ellington?"

"No," replied Ormsby. "I have just

heard of the accident. He was taken up on that train. I am going up to see if he is killed."

"Better for him if he is killed," said Gideon. "Is there a train going up now? I didn't know there was a train at this hour."

"There is no regular train, but the company is going to send up a relief train. One went up as soon as they heard of the accident, and now they are going to send another. Fortunately I know the superintendent, who is going up, and got permission to go along."

"Can you get me that permission?" asked Gideon.

"Without doubt," said Ormsby, glad to have even Gideon Welles as a companion in the gruesome errand.

The permission was granted, and the relief train, with Ormsby and Welles as passengers, pulled out for Hastings. The track was clear, and they made rapid headway.

The train had no sooner stopped than Gideon was out, and Ormsby after him.

The scene upon which they looked cannot be adequately described.

The flames from the burning cars threw a lurid glare over the landscape, and reflected far out into the waters of the Hudson. A dense smoke hung over the place, and the air was filled with horrible odors and heart-rending cries.

On a level piece of ground, away from the track, was a row of bodies, and all around were wounded people, some nursing their own wounds, some under the care of surgeons, and some rendered unconscious by the injuries and the flames.

An excited throng hovered around the scene, helping the relief force sent by the company in the herculean task of taking the bodies from the burning ruins.

The two engines were jammed together in a shapeless mass. Three passenger-cars lay in a heap, smashed and burning.

Ormsby and Gideon made anxious inquiries among the trainmen. No one knew Ellington, but they had seen two men handcuffed together riding in one of the forward cars.

The conductor of the train was found.

"I have a list of the uninjured, which is as complete as it can be under the circumstances," he said, taking a notebook from his pocket. "It was the idea of one of the passengers, and the others readily fell in. They knew it would be difficult to identify the dead, so they came to me and gave me the names of the living. Thus, having a list of those who are saved, we may get at those who are burned up."

"Have you anywhere on the list the name of George Ellington?" asked Ormsby.

"The murderer that was being taken to Sing Sing?"

"Yes."

"No. I haven't seen him nor the officer that had him in charge. They were handcuffed together. If one is dead the other must be."

"Where can we get a lantern to look among the dead?" asked Ormsby. "The light from the burning cars does not suffice—it throws fitful shadows."

"I'll lend you mine."

The conductor's lantern was taken by Ormsby, and a moment later was flashing in the ghastly, upturned faces of those who had been taken from the wreck before the flames had made identification impossible.

One by one Ormsby and Welles examined these bodies, but Ellington's was not there.

"He may have escaped, for all the conductor," said Welles.

"He is there!" said Ormsby, pointing to the burning train.

They stood among the crowd a while, watching the relief corps work. Now and then the charred and fire-eaten body of some unfortunate was dragged out of the ruins.

Suddenly the conductor ran up to them.

"They have found something on the other side of the train that may interest you," he said.

They followed him around to the other side.

A group of workers were bending over two charred and blackened bodies that lay side by side on the ground. The right wrist of one was handcuffed to the left wrist of the other.

The fire had made more horrible the work of death, and the faces and clothing of the men were burned and distorted beyond recognition. But identification was not difficult. On the left breast of one of them was Officer Bender's badge. This and the handcuffs were enough.

"Horrible!" said Ormsby.

"The law has been cheated out of a victim," said Welles.

"No. Justice has been defrauded; that's all," replied Ormsby. "I might have saved him."

These two, who had met almost as enemies at Ellington's trial, did all that could now be done for the unfortunate man. When it was possible, the handcuffs were cut off, the bodies separated and each placed in a casket, upon which the lid was screwed fast.

Never again did mortal eyes look upon the burned and blackened faces that lay therein.

The caskets were taken to New York, and that of Officer Bender was handed over to his friends. Owing to the condition of Mr. Ellington, the body of George was not taken to his house, but the funeral service was held in an undertaker's rooms.

Grace, weeping and veiled, accompanied by her mother, was there, and than hurried back to Mr. Ellington.

Ormsby and Welles followed the unfortunate to the grave. When the last spadeful of earth had fallen upon the spot, they turned away, and Ormsby said:

"The tragedy of the nineteenth century is ended!"

Gideon stood looking toward the setting sun. A peculiar look was on his face which Ormsby did not see. He made no answer.

That same day, at a later hour, a soul departed from its aged, earthly prison; and as Grace Emmett stood by the bedside of Mr. Ellington, she said:

"Now he knows it all. He has gone to join—my darling."

In an album which rested on a table in the cozy little parlor was a recent photograph of George Ellington. Grace took this out, and showing it to the housekeeper, asked:

"May I have that?"

"Sure you may, Miss," was the reply. "Sure I don't know whatever to do with these things after the funeral. Who does them belong to now?"

"His wife—George's wife," said Grace, softly; and folding the picture to her breast, she went away.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 13.]

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ON STARTING HOUSEKEEPING.

At some time nearly all of us are interested in starting housekeeping, either on our own account or for the sake of our children or friends. The few to whom this excitement never comes are sorry to miss it. Anybody who is near the little whirl of business made by "furnishing" is sure to be drawn into the vortex. The millionaire, who has only to give his orders to an artistic "furnish-throughout" firm, will feel impelled to examine the suggestions in some detail, and especially to watch the planning of such parts of the home arrangements as involve his personal comfort. The inheritor of house and furniture from ancestors who were rich, artistic and lovers of ease will be sure to feel himself under the necessity of doing his own furnishing somewhere to suit his own taste. To most of us the starting of housekeeping marks a crucial epoch in our lives, when we take upon ourselves the full responsibility of manhood or womanhood.

Young lovers are, of course, very ready to believe that their happiness in the future depends wholly upon the state of their feelings; but their more sober elders can tell them that before long common practical considerations will vie with romance as causes of domestic happiness or disappointment, and a bad start in housekeeping will give the most charming love a severe testing. It is especially to the wife's advantage to make the home a pleasant resting-place, a nest of comfort, more attractive than the haunts of bachelordom. Unfortunately a wrong start may quickly cause the home to be a care, a tyranny, an irksome bondage, till married life, in spite of its natural attractions, resembles the inauspicious voyage described by Shakespeare—"bound in shallows and in miseries." The impulse in the right or the wrong direction is frequently dependent on the start made in housekeeping. In this enterprise the first evidence of good judgment or weak compliance with whims is shown. To start with a sufficiency for a start, yet modestly, is the secret of building up a pleasant home without becoming enmeshed in harassing and insupportable ambitions. Housekeeping is properly a growth. It cannot be bought up straight out of hand; the home must form gradually round the characters of its inmates. It is not reasonable to expect that young people, especially if they leave families comfortably well-to-do, will start life at the level of their parents' mode of furnishing and living. They will not be able to think out and perfect a scheme complete. Let it grow. On the other hand, it is advisable that the poor should be able to begin with a home more nearly up to the standard of their ideal of comfort, for the chances are that they will find fewer opportunities of improving their home in the coming years. Or, to put the fact into figures, the man with fifteen hundred dollars a year can afford to start his housekeeping on a somewhat more modest scale than his income would warrant; for, if he and his wife are economical, they may have a margin of saving that will enable them during the first half-dozen years of their married life to beautify their home; whereas the household that is kept up on ten dollars a week should begin well, since the balance of unused wages will only renew and will not add much to the furniture and trappings that create a helpful pride in the home.

The first consideration in starting housekeeping is the house. It sets the scale upon which expenditure must be built. If the young people make a mistake in this respect, they may find themselves committed to undreamt-of cares. We are not about to argue that economy should have the first consideration. Seeing how much time is spent in the home, how largely people are judged by the house they live in, and how greatly their own self-respect is unconsciously dependent on the appearance they present to the world, a good house is almost essential to making the most of life and enjoying living instead of wearying oneself to find the means of living without ever attaining the end. The problem is to secure adequate comfort and consideration without being committed to a greater expense than can be easily afforded. Healthiness, locality, size and arrangement are the four points of greatest importance in choosing a house. It would be a mistake to suppose that healthiness necessarily depends upon locality. It may do so in a negative way, the presumption being that a house in a crowded quarter, with an exhalation-laden atmosphere, will not be healthy; but it cannot be safely supposed that a house, however well placed, will be in good sanitary condition. Since health is, beyond all comparison, the most important of human considerations, a pure and plentiful water-supply, a modern system of drainage in good working order, a soil that will not be unfavorable to constitutional weaknesses, a possibility of free ventilation and an abundance of cheerful light should be regarded as essential preliminaries.

Locality often has more influence than rent in determining the status of a dwelling house and its desirability as a place of residence. Convenience for business and for preserving friendship and making relaxation easy is one ground on which locality should be considered; but social reasons are also strong, for a house in one quarter at half the rent may be dear when its associations are counted in. This is as true of the poor as of the rich. Who has not observed that to take a house in a certain row, or even street, is to lose caste? Every district has its character as well defined as that of every man. It may be unjust and foolish to judge people by the place where they live, in total disregard of the essentials of their conduct and character, and no doubt, in the course of years straightforward people will make themselves a fitting reputation anywhere; but the majority of people cannot afford a lengthened experiment of that kind, and find it more convenient to take the world as they find it, and count up the effect of locality when they are choosing a house.

The first thought that will come to the novice in housekeeping when the size of the house is mentioned, is the effect upon the rent; but there are other less obvious considerations that are of a good deal of importance, such as the cost of fitting up, as well as keeping up, a house that is larger than necessity demands. Not only does the more pretentious home either require more service, or else, what is equally important, more work from the mistress of the house, but such expenses as fitting up an additional number of windows and passages may very easily be overlooked. The ideal house for the young couple is that which is best situated, healthy, sufficiently large to accommodate friends, sufficiently small to minimize work, free from fixtures, so that the occupier's taste may have free play, and —a matter of very great importance—compactly arranged, so that it is not obligatory to take a rambling walk between the cooking-room and the eating-room. These are but a few of the questions that confront the young couple who would make a start in housekeeping, and are about to busy themselves with the perplexing duty of finding a house.

Finding a house! What a task it is! Finding apartments is bad enough, but it has a much stronger element of humanity in it than finding a house. It is dull, depressing, blankly material. You can go to any house-agent for a bunch of his docketed keys, and he will trust you to unlock, inspect and lock up any one on his long list of unlikely, shuttered, echoing houses. It requires the imagination of a woman to drape and tenant the square bare rooms of a "house to let" and make them appear tolerable. Probably not one man in ten thousand realizes what the quiet polishings and judicious hidings of his women-folk amount to, unless he happens to look carefully over an empty house and then see it "put to rights." The gate creaks on its hinges through disuse. The brass bell-pull has lost its gloss and the bell-wire its springiness. Every defect in the papering and painting obtrudes itself glaringly upon you. A sprinkling of nail-heads, torturingly unsightly, mock the pictureless walls; the careless workmen who pursued the last escape of gas have left the boards loosely agape; in simple faith or heedless haste the advertisement distributers have sown the silent hall with circulars, dropped through the letter-box or pushed under the door; the stagnant air is fetid for want of light and a through-draught; an unlatched door is banging disconsolately somewhere upstairs; and as for the kitchen, it is inconceivable that a place usually so warm, ruddy and full of life can be so repellently cold and bare. The grass plot in front is rank and riotous, and weeds are clambering triumphantly over the untended flowers. How can this place ever be made into a trim and cozy home? Those are the unbelieving thoughts that many a man has harbored as he has tramped the bare, echoing boards of the "house to let" that a woman's taste will in a few days transfigure beyond recognition, and that her imagination has already draped and furnished until it is beautiful in her sight. The moral is that purblind man should be modest and believing when he finds himself in the midst of an empty desolation which is soon to be his comfortable home.

But let us suppose that the house has been found; that its healthiness is beyond question; that its locality is suitable; and that, on the whole, the quest has left the searchers satisfied and laughing at their dismal experiences in unsuitable dwellings that apparently no skill could make sweet and bright and inviting. Then there comes the furnishing. We imagine that a vast proportion of women and a fair sprinkling of men fancy they could easily plan the complete furnishing of the house they covet, and with the help of catalogues name a sum that will just cover the whole expense. There they are wrong. They probably have no conception of the elasticity that must be allowed for in furnishing. Of course, it is necessary that an inclusive sum should be named by young people who are fitting up a home; but it is advisable that they should "make believe" as hard as possible, and very resolutely determine that they will keep in hand, for later additions, at least thirty per cent. of the money which they might have spent on furniture and other domestic appointments. Plan as carefully as they please, and determine as much as they may, they will assuredly find that forgotten necessities, and that insatiable item "sundries," and the specious excuse, "Really this higher-priced article is so much better worth the money," will have absorbed that carefully-guarded extra thirty per cent. of cash before the furnishing is over. They must remember that every party from whom they buy will be bent on proving conclusively to them that, although the articles which they had thought good enough would be fairly satisfactory for somebody else, for them an extra size or an extra price would be a great deal better.

Then the buying of things to suit the particular house will upset the best-laid schemes. And here be it said that wise furnishers will bear in mind the certainty that no house is a permanent dwelling-place, and that a great deal may be saved by buying furniture and carpets that will be adaptable to almost any rooms. Probably in no situation in later life will the temptation be stronger than while furnishing to break good resolutions respecting expense and so begin the separate home-life with an unnecessary burden. The installment system is another temptation which, though occasionally convenient, is always dear. They who will not make the sacrifice necessary for beginning life clear of debt ought not to marry; for what likelihood is there of money being saved after marriage if it could not be saved before? They who start housekeeping with money in their purse, and who can keep their resolution to reserve something for the later wants that will arise and the additional furnishing that experience may show to be expedient, are the only wise householders; for the others run the risk, at least, of their home, which should be the principal source of comfort, becoming a care and a tyranny.

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A NEW LIFE-BOAT.

Anything that bears upon life saving at sea is of great interest to humane persons. There have been many inventions in the way of life-boats, but most of them have many objections, and some have proven themselves in emergencies entirely worthless. A new boat is divided into two lengthwise sections. There are water-tight compartments which are filled with air-tight metallic tanks. These are fastened to the floor of the boat, and are intended as receptacles for provisions, water, clothing and the like, and in cases of emergency, ammunition. It makes not the slightest difference how the boat comes in contact with the water—whether she be pitched in headforemost or dropped backwards or sidewise—as she rights herself almost instantly and is practically non-sinkable. The tanks for food assist in keeping her afloat, as, if properly closed, they alone would keep the boat from swamping.

Those who have studied the build of this boat declare it the most sensible and practical article of its kind that has as yet been produced.

SUPREME AWARD - WORLD'S FAIR - -

Pabst Malt Extract
The "Best" Tonic
Gives to the weak and enervated vital energy lifting one from despondency to buoyant happiness.

GOLD MEDAL AND DIPLOMA, CONSTITUTING HIGHEST AWARD. MUNICH INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION. 1895. AN UNPARALLELED VICTORY IN THE VERY HOME OF BREWING.

PABST
B
MILWAUKEE
THE ART OF BREWING WAS DEVELOPED BY THE GERMANS

CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD.

Where the Mohammedans Live.

"Oh, it is funny where the Mohammedans live," said little Ben. "It is all different from the United States. People do not look or talk the same or do the same things. I went to Turkey and Arabia once. I travelled about a great deal with grandpa.

"I saw the mosques, which are their churches. They do not have bells; they call the people to prayer with their voices; going out upon places made to stand on, and clapping their hands and crying out: 'Come to prayer, oh, ye faithful, come to prayer.' Then the people pray, but they wash their hands first. They must wash before they utter the name of 'Allah,' which is what they call God.

"Grandpa told me what they meant, and after awhile I understood a little myself, and could talk to Ali."

"Who was Ali?" asked Cousin Jim.

"He was Mr. Kutub's largest boy," said Ben. "Of course, the gentleman was not called *Mister*, but I do not know what else to say. He was a merchant. He entertained grandpa very nicely.

"They always drank coffee when they talked business. Mr. Kutub had a long, black beard. It came to his waist. It was glossy as silk. He was always very serious.

"Mrs. Kutub stayed in a room of her own, where there were other ladies, and kept the little girls with her.

"The ladies wore thin, white veils even in the house. Out of doors a black silk gown, like a Mother Hubbard, and a veil that hid every bit of her face but one eye. The ladies rode on donkeys when they went out. They never walked. They seemed very pleasant, and laughed a good deal.

"The little girls never played with us.

"All the little boys had bald heads. They were shaved smooth. They wore funny little turbans on them, and had loose trousers and cloth gowns, and slippers with curly toes. They took off their slippers when they went into the house.

"I went to school with them once. The schoolmaster was a young man, dressed much as they were. He sat on a flat cushion in the middle of the room, and all the scholars sat about him in a half-circle, right on the floor. He had a sort of flat tray, full of sand, and a long ivory stick with a sharp point. When they were all assembled he made them say something. I think it must have been a little prayer. Then he wrote something on the sand with the stick. Each of the pupils read it in turn. Then the teacher wrote something else. When the sand was covered with writing, a little black boy came and made it smooth again.

"The Bible they use is called the Koran, and all the boys had to be taught that by heart; but I could not stay while they were learning that, because I was not a Mohammedan. The boys played more than they studied, and they had cimitars made of tin and gilded.

"I stayed with Mr. Kutub's family a good many weeks. Then he left home to go with a caravan across the desert, and he told me that he would take me to my grandfather.

"I said good-bye to Ali and the other boys, and asked them to come and see me in New York, and then I went away with Mr. Kutub.

"We travelled some time before we came to a town on the borders of the desert we had to cross. It was a great place, covered with sand. There were lots of camels, all laden with packs of goods. The camels kneel down and are loaded, and rise with their loads. There were litters on most of them for people to ride on, and awnings over them.

"There was one camel which carried, besides a litter with a striped awning all trimmed with fringe, a very queer, long bag. Mr. Kutub told me I must ride that camel. The camel was named Lulee. The drivers were kinder to her than they were to the other animals, but she seemed unhappy. The bag seemed to worry her, and she kept turning her head to look at it, and grumbling and grunting discontentedly.

"It was such a queer-looking bag that I kept wondering what could be in it. Now and then I thought it moved. We started at night. People always cross the desert after dark for the sake of coolness, and the stars and moon were overhead, and the bells on the camels' necks jingled, and the drivers began to sing together. It was all so strange and quiet that I should have liked it very much, only that riding on a camel makes people as if they were seasick at first. When the morning came, and the caravan stopped for breakfast, I was very glad.

"The camels seemed glad, too, especially Lulee. She kneeled down in a great hurry, and looked at me as if she would eat me when Mr. Kutub lifted me off of her back. Then she looked at the bag and gave such a heart-broken cry. Mr. Kutub laughed, and said:

"'Now look, little Ben—look!'

"Indeed I did look, for one of the camel-drivers was opening the queer bag, and as he did so, out came four long legs, like stilts, and a tiny, white body, and a neck like a snake, and a queer little head, with yellow eyes, a great mouth that seemed to be grinning, and big, flapping lips. It was funnier than any brownie. I could not guess what it could be, and I asked Mr. Kutub.

"'He is a baby camel,' he told me, 'Lulee's baby. She loves him—see how glad.' And, indeed, Lulee was glad, and so was the baby, who began the funniest dance you ever saw, its long legs going all ways at once. He seemed to be showing off, like a conceited person, and I laughed and laughed. I have to laugh now when I think of that baby camel. It was the funniest thing I saw in all my journeys. After awhile it grew tired and lay down close to its mother and had its breakfast, just like a little calf, and when it had finished the men milked Lulee, and we all had camel's milk and hot cakes for breakfast. They tasted very nice."

Correspondence

Attention to Young Women. (J. T. E.)—The following letter is interesting as showing some of the peculiar conditions of mind in which some young people occasionally find themselves. It is published because the writer is not the only one who is afflicted with a class of sentiments that will scarcely be found of advantage to cherish and follow out: "Happening to pick up the February 1st issue of the *Ledger*, I saw in the Correspondence column a letter written by Mercedes, a young woman twenty years of age, and was particularly interested in the 'fond looks' which she mentions. I wish to advise Mercedes not to be too hasty in judging the young man, for reasons which I will proceed to show. I am twenty-four years of age, and possess a countenance which, while not at all handsome in outline, yet has a sweetness of expression which I notice is considerably attractive to those of the other sex who value sweetness of expression above mere facial beauty. I am wont to study the faces of people in general, both men and women, and have found that certain of the female sex seemed to take my glances more seriously than I intended they should, and consequently I have felt compelled time and again to swing around to an opposite course of action. The reason of this will be evident when I tell Mercedes that I have been paying attentions to a young lady of about my own age, and through my desire to remain faithful and loyal to her, could not do anything that might raise a suspicion in her mind that I was not acting honorably toward her. My relations with the opposite sex have been diffident even to the point of prudishness, although I have every reason to suppose from what I have seen and heard that I am credited with a state of mind that is not quite what I claim to possess. Consequently, I would again advise Mercedes of the uncertainty of mere observation and hearsay in regard to her young man. For if the young lady to whom I have been paying attentions should see me merely studying persons of her sex, she would probably have as much reason as Mercedes for objecting to the 'fond glances' bestowed upon others. In fact, in the library of the Educational Institution which I am attending, I have observed particularly a young woman who bears such a resemblance in features, expression and actions to the young woman to whom I have been giving my attentions that I have been particularly interested in her, although my study of her has been, and is, in no danger of getting beyond mere interest." J. T. E. is apparently in the condition of the young man in the opera of "Patience," who considered himself so highly that he frequently walked out to allow young women to admire him. Such a state of mind belongs only to youth and is outgrown when people become more settled and sensible. Young men are altogether too fond of making themselves extremely agreeable and of showing the most tender attentions to young women, and then if anything appears to be taken in earnest to open their eyes widely, and in the most regretful tones declare they "never, never meant anything." Such a course is dishonorable and unchristian, and whatever the motive may be, is beneath the dignity of a well-bred and honorable man.

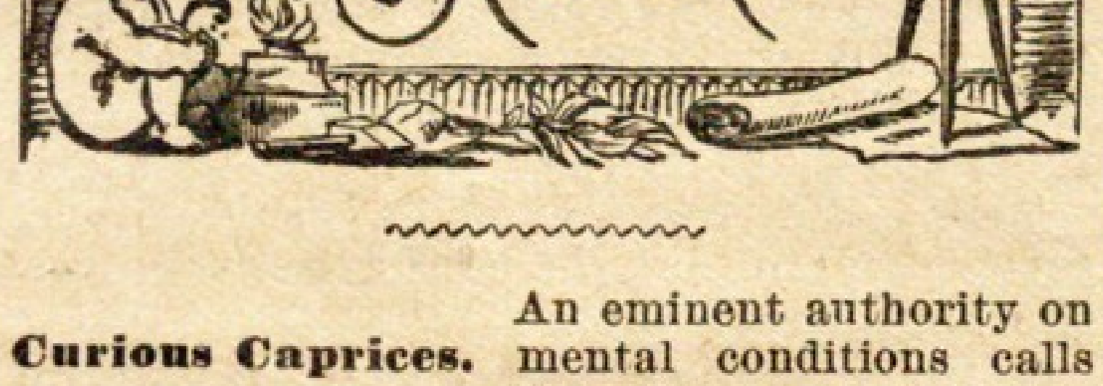
Pertinent Inquiries.—A Constant Reader asks if one may wear a tea-gown to receive callers; also, should they be shown through one's new house? In sending out announcement cards for a day "at home," is it customary to serve a light luncheon? *Answer:* One may only receive very intimate friends in a tea-gown—that is, any garment of a tea-gown order that suggests negligee or morning-dress or a wrapper. This latter garment, in any of its modifications, is not to be worn save in one's own apartment or in the strict privacy of home life. It is much better to wear a simple, stylish, in-door costume, rather than attempt to adapt anything in tea-gown style to such purposes. Whether visitors should be shown through one's house depends entirely on their relations to the family. If they are extremely intimate personal friends, it is a very pleasant and proper thing to do; but casual acquaintances and society friends are not to be so treated. It would be presuming in them to expect it and a breach of propriety for the hostess to offer it. In a series of "at homes," one may have a light luncheon for the occasion, afterward it is not at all necessary unless one chooses. Some ladies always serve afternoon tea, and some simple cake. This has its advantages, especially in cold weather, as coming in from out of doors one finds a cup of hot tea very comfortable and acceptable.

Visiting Cards.—Little Girl asks if it is not allowable for her to have her name on visiting cards. *Answer:* By no means. Until a young lady has grown to an age when she is received into society, she should not have a visiting card. It is customary in cities if young girls are taken out, and any necessity arises, to write their names on the visiting cards of their mothers or elder sisters. A schoolgirl is not supposed to be a member of society. The eldest daughter of the household, when she reaches proper age, has her cards engraved "Miss Smith." Her Christian name is omitted. This indicates that she is the eldest daughter, as no other member of the family has a right to use the name in this way. If her aunt is Miss Smith matters become somewhat complicated; but the fact that there is another Miss Smith in the family does not alter the situation. One household managed this condition very well by writing in pencil in the lower left-hand corner of the card, merely the Christian name "Miss Mary." This was done both by the aunt and niece, either one being justly entitled to use the name Miss Smith. Therefore they compromised the matter in this agreeable fashion, and everybody understood the reason.

Day of Week.—(J. M. H.) January 5, 1845, fell on Sunday.

Sewing Schools.—Reader asks about sewing schools. *Answer:* There are sewing schools connected with almost all of the churches and benevolent societies. The Young Women's Christian Association and Cooper Union have classes in almost all branches, and some auxiliary institutions give attention to this branch. Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and many of the public schools make a specialty of sewing. It is very easy for one to get instruction in needlework, and every young woman should do her best to excel in this strictly feminine art.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*



Science

Curious Caprices. An eminent authority on mental conditions calls attention to the peculiar fads and fancies that seem to take hold upon the minds of many persons and to entirely dominate them, much to their disadvantage and often to the deterioration of their mental powers. One man who conceived a fancy for counting the numbers on freight cars, carried this notion to such an extent that he oftentimes forgot errands and neglected his business. He began by having his attention called to the figures on a car that surprised him as indicating a very large number of cars owned by a certain railroad. Then it entered into his mind to look for the next lower number. This he did, and found it, after several weeks' watching. Then he was filled with the idea of securing the numbers in succession, and gave his attention to picking them out whenever he went near railroads. He had a book for this purpose, and so completely did this take possession of him that he became exceedingly annoyed and irritated when it grew so dark that he could not see the figures on the cars as he passed them. The case became rather serious, and the attention of a physician was called to it. He recommended a long sea voyage, which was taken, much against the patient's will, as he was reluctant to give up his hunt for numbers. After he had become entirely accustomed to the absence of his favorite amusement, he was reasoned with and shown the folly of it. Being a man of strong will, he took himself in hand, and, after a hard struggle, was able to go about, oblivious to the fact that freight cars had figures on them.

Future of the Panorama. There are few better educators than the panorama. Who of us cannot remember our first impressions of various countries and changing scenes as opened to our view by the panorama. Of late, however, this form of exhibition has fallen into disuse, largely, no doubt, because it is too unwieldy, and involves too much time, money and labor to be profitable. The new idea in panoramic or cycloramic art is exceedingly interesting, as showing the advance in methods on this line. A prepared wall, lining a cylindrical chamber, is all that is required as a permanent plant. Upon this wall pictures are thrown after the fashion of stereopticon views. The apparatus is suspended in the center of the room, like a chandelier. Electric lights are connected with it, and the exhibiting apparatus occupies a circular table attached to the upper rim of a round box-shaped receiver, in the middle of which the operator stands. The table is readily revolved, and has sets of projectors, lanterns, kinetoscopes, kinematographs and other necessary arrangements. Vanishing effects and tones of all grades, from the brightest to the most shadowy, are at hand. With this equipment it is possible to picture the march of an army, the movements of animals and vehicles, or the antics and pranks of human beings, moonlight effects, naval battles, ships in motion, and all of the various scenes of life can be accurately depicted.

Oil on Troubled Waters. It is an old-established fact that oil sprayed on the surface of water will calm the waves, and often save a ship; but it will be a new idea to many that soap-suds will have the same effect. An English steamer was caught in a heavy storm on the Atlantic, and being without oil to use for this purpose, the captain conceived the idea of utilizing a quantity of soap which he found among his stores. The soap was dissolved in water, making a compound the consistency of gruel. This was flung over the bows of the boat, and with startling results. Almost immediately the waves were calmed and the vessel rode in safety. A similar experiment was tried on a French steamer which was struck by a squall. The officer dissolved three kilogrammes of soap in seventy liters of water. This solution was allowed to trickle over the bow of the boat, and it so smoothed the water that for a space of about ten meters wide the waves gave them no disturbance, not even breaking over the sides of the vessel. As an alternative this discovery is an exceedingly valuable one. Soap can be compressed into small space and a sufficient amount might be carried to insure comparative safety to any vessel without occupying any appreciable space.

Antarctic Explorations. The scarcity of seals and whales has led scientists to wonder if they may not have migrated to the extreme south, and having found undisturbed quarters there, have concluded to remain in that region. At all events, a London syndicate is about starting out an expedition to the Antarctic continent. Several whaling vessels and some small steamships will make up the little fleet. An Antarctic explorer is going out with the ships on a scientific investigation. Other expeditions are talked of if this one is successfully started.

At Stettin, in Prussia, near which there is a peat moor, apples and pears have been preserved successfully by being packed in "mull," the dust from the dry litter of the peat. It is very light, has no smell, and can be used many times over.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

All questions which may be asked on the subjects treated in this Department will be answered in the Correspondence column.

Fashion and Fancy. Among the coming articles of apparel, it is said that the jersey is again to be brought out. Especially will it be adapted for use on the wheel. This is a pleasant modification of the sweater, which was by many women thought too rough-looking and mannish for their purposes.

The new jersey cloth is soft, fine and thick enough to be firm without being too warm. All colors are to be used, and these garments are to be made up with full sleeves and a ripple skirt, if one likes, or they are gathered into a belt, to which the dress-skirt is attached.

It is an understood fact among the best dressed wheelwomen that some sort of basque skirt is much more becoming than the plain round waist. Some of the handsomest suits have the basque skirts just long enough to reach to the saddle.

These jersey waists will have leg-o'-mutton sleeves, and some of them will be made with turned-back collars in rever shape and worn with an inner waist, after the fashion of a sailor costume. One thing must be distinctly understood in the wearing of these waists—a perfectly fitting underbody, corset-cover or corset-waist must be worn, for without this there is a suggestion of slumpiness and slouchiness that is by no means to be tolerated. Trimness, daintiness and style are absolutely indispensable if one would present an agreeable appearance on the bicycle.

DAINTY NECKWEAR.—Whatever one's dress may be, neckwear is something the importance of which no well-dressed woman can afford to ignore. The plainest costume becomes more attractive, and a pretty one may be so improved by judiciously arranged neck-dressing that it is suitable for almost any ordinary occasion.

The woman who wants to make much out of little should provide a goodly stock of these dainty accessories. Among the desirable models are long, pointed, half shawl-shaped pieces of lace, trimmed with lace edging put on very full. The lace is not cut through the middle, but the shawl-points run out very long and slender, while the middle portion is not wide—twenty-four inches at the widest part being sufficient. The best design for this is made in a very long-pointed, diamond-shaped piece of lace. The edging may be of any width desired, but that of three or four inches is thought to be most appropriate. One can buy these articles made up, but it is more economical to make them at home. A yard and a quarter of net-lace will be required for one large scarf, and eight or nine yards of edging to trim it. The corner of net that comes off after the original one is cut out may be utilized for a smaller scarf trimmed with narrower lace. This is pretty for morning or more simple use, and need be trimmed only on one side and a little way around the points.

A soft collar and long front of very rich brocade is edged with fine lace about three inches wide. The lace is set around the lower edge of the collar and down the sides and around the point of this front, then if the wearer pleases, a jabot of lace may extend from the sides of the collar down the middle of the front to the point. These confections are suitable for wear over silk dresses of all sorts or with velvet waists. They are not specially appropriate for wool dresses, which should have a trimming less elaborate. Many ladies do not put white neck dressing on over wool costumes, but make fronts of fanciful material and edge them with black lace. The collar is also black-lace trimmed, but may have a ruching of white at the upper edge. It will be a great pleasure and satisfaction to a large number of women to know that white neck ruching is returning to favor and is to be used in dresses of all sorts.

This is as it should be, for the fashion of wearing dresses without white in the neck has never been approved as artistic. A handsome and stylish finish is made of satin in any favored color or in white and black. This is cut in a modified sailor-collar shape and is edged with handsome galloon either in gold or silk, or in passementerie or embroidery. From this edge is a fall of lace. The fronts may meet at the throat and a standing collar be worn with it, or a full ruching of lace or ribbon may be put on in place of a collar. One of these sailor decorations has the fronts turned back at the neck so that they make a slender V-shaped opening, the lower edge of the collar meeting over the bust. This space is filled in with full puffings or plaitings of lace. A novel and pretty collar is made of white kid lined with satin. This is embroidered with colored silk and tiny pearl beads, and is lace edged. A Medici collar of kid, with satin lining and embroidery, is rolled back from the throat, and there are inner sections that close across the front. These also are of kid, and have buttons and buttonholes as fastenings. The use of leather

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10 Choice Annuals, (everybody's favorites), all new, fresh seeds, sure to grow and bloom this season. Pansy, 40 colors and markings; Phlox, 20 colors; Verbena, 18 colors; Pinks 10 colors; Petunia, 10 colors; Asters, 12 colors; Balsam, 8 colors; Sweet Peas, 12 colors; Mignonette and Sweet Alyssum.
FOR 12 CENTS and the name and address of two of your friends who grow flowers, I will send, postpaid, the complete collection, one pkt. each of the ten varieties (enough for any ordinary garden.) This is a BONAFIDE offer, made to introduce my home grown flower seeds to new customers and which I guarantee to please you or the amount paid refunded and the seeds given as a present.
Miss C. H. LIPPINCOTT,
319 and 323 Sixth St. So., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

(Continued.)

is becoming quite general as dress trimmings, and whether embroidered, trimmed with galloon or bound and stitched, is much liked. The binding and stitching are appropriate for travelling costumes and the wheel, but not for dressy occasions. Wide, flaring cuffs are made of similar material, and are popular and becoming.

Fashion Notes. Arrangements for my lady's comfort are not neglected. Especially is this so in the provision of dressing sacques, matinées and morning sacques. A pretty one has a yoke and full breadths falling therefrom. There are openings in the front for the arms to pass through, and instead of sleeves there are deep ruffles of embroidery or lace. This is especially comfortable for hot summer mornings, when even the thinnest lawn seems to hold the heat and add to one's general uneasiness.

The fashionable dress skirt is shown without dust ruffles. Just why this is so it is not easy to say, as every woman who has had experience knows that they are a great saving to shoes, and are besides very much easier to walk in than skirts made without them. So useful are they that many ladies have all their petticoats made with them, and imagine them of great advantage.

A stylish suit is made of striped and figured taffeta. The skirt is plain, and waist is made with wide revers, and Eton jacket of the taffeta over a very full waist of crimped Japanese crape. The sleeves are enormous puffs of the crape from shoulders to elbows, with the lower portions made of the crape shirred on a foundation in loose puffs.

Pretty collarettes are made of wide Dresden ribbon passed once around the throat and finished with a bow and loops at the back of the neck. The bow should be made and so arranged as to be closed with hooks at the back. When the ribbon is tied it is much more difficult to manage, and its beauty is gone after a couple of wearings.

Spring jackets afford but few new suggestions, Some of the most stylish ones are double-breasted, and have wide revers; others are single-breasted, with stand-up collars that flare away from the front.

Spring bonnets are rather flat, and are trimmed high at the sides. Some of the new ones, of fancy braid, are extremely pretty, and, with a little simple trimming, make handsome and inexpensive headgear.

It is confidently asserted that the decadence of the full skirt has set in, and that the next models will show none of the fullness in front which is so much objected to by many persons,

For information, thanks are due to Messrs. James McCreery & Co. and B. Altman & Co.

Arrangement of a Nursery. It has been the custom in many houses to make use of the upper story of the dwelling as a day nursery. This arrangement, while it may take the children away from the family and remove the noise of their romps and pranks as far off as possible, is a great mistake, on account of the immense wear and tear on the nerves and muscles of those who look out for the little ones. Besides, it is not well to keep the children too far from the rest of the household.

They may be noisy, naturally they will be, but they should be trained not to be boisterous. There is a difference between the necessary noise of their pleasures and games and the tremendous racket that is permitted in the top stories of some establishments. If there is a good-sized room in the second floor of the extension or wing, this makes an excellent apartment for this purpose. Its furnishings should be as plain as possible, and as perfectly suited to the purpose as the means and judgment of the household will permit.

There is a wide divergence of opinion as to the propriety of covering the nursery floor with a carpet. It has its advantages as a preventer of bumps and bruises, especially if thickly padded underneath. All things being equal, a very thick well-laid carpet is best. The perfection of arrangements in this line was reached by a woman who had the floor covered with cocoa matting, and over this a good quality of Brussels carpet. The carpet was tacked down very tightly, and stretched to its utmost capacity. The broom never entered the nursery for regular work, the carpet-sweeper and a damp cloth took up all of the surface dust, and the other worked through the carpet and thence down through the matting to the floor. Once in two or four weeks the furniture was taken out, the windows opened and a most thorough sweeping and beating of the carpet took place. Between times no dust was raised in the room. The carpet was wiped off with a cloth at least every other day, and all of the woodwork was wiped instead of being dusted.

Because there was no room for it elsewhere, the day nursery was the sleeping-room for four children, but each had its separate bed, and there was an open grate-fire during the cold weather, and a large lamp burned in the open fireplace every night in summer. This created a continuous draught, also furnished light for the room. The furniture was simple but substantial, and each child had its cupboard, bureau or box for its own treasures upon which the others were never permitted to trespass. If Johnnie claimed one of Jennie's toys and put it in his locker, the mother or the nurse was the board of arbitration to adjust the difficulty, as one child was not allowed to open the treasure-house of its companions.

It seems sometimes rather hard to give up the best room in the house to the children, but when one reflects upon the importance of proper environment, the deprivation fades into nothingness. If children are kept close at hand, the ever-watchful ear of the mother can detect even incipient symptoms of disagreement, and a word in time may avert a great many "nines" that day by day would multiply and increase, until at last it grew into a habit of quarreling that might lay the foundation for the family jars and heart-burnings that sometimes descend from generation to generation.

Patterns.

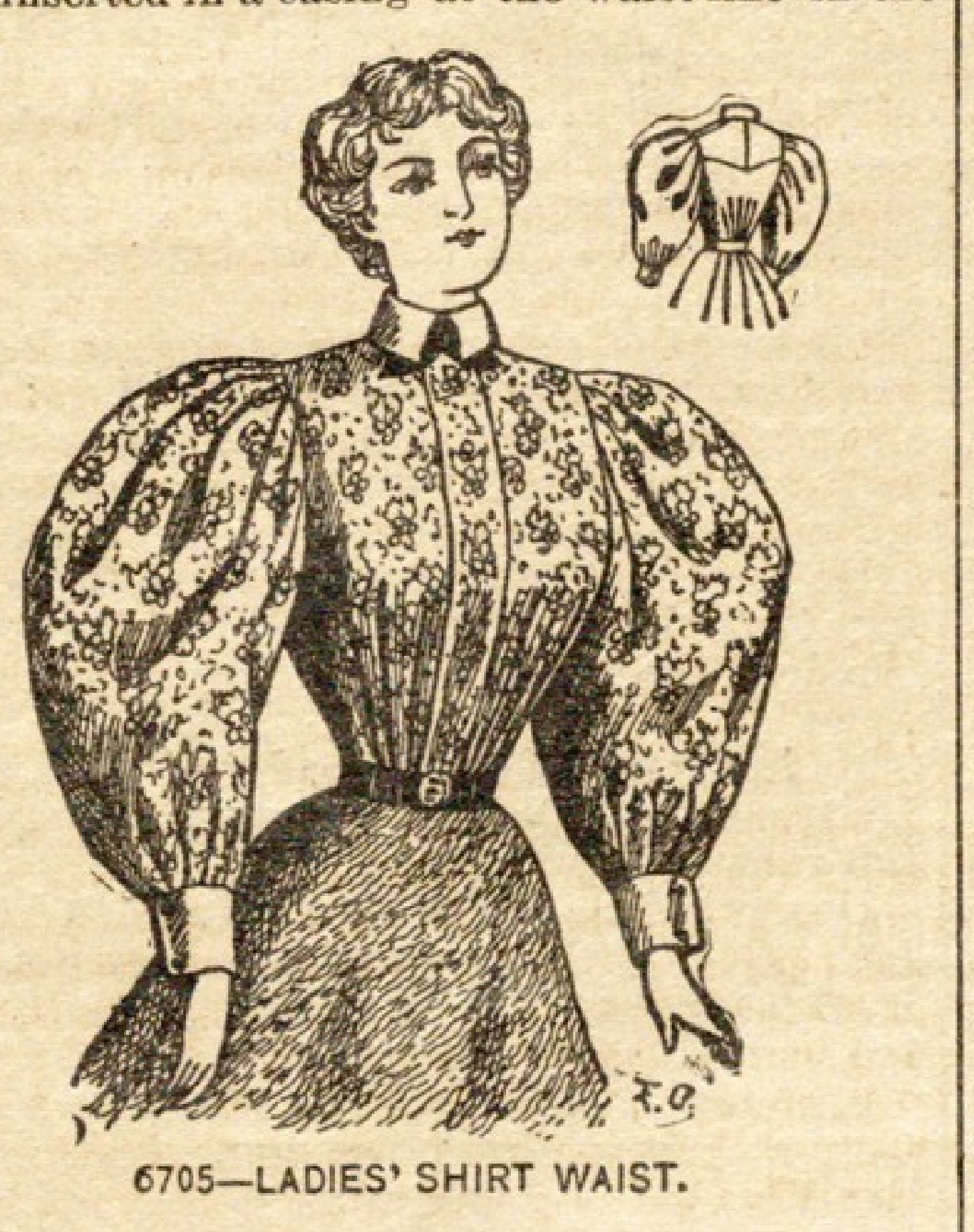
We have made special arrangements by which we can supply our readers with dress-patterns by mail, prepaid, at the nominal price of ten cents per pattern.

Each issue of the *Ledger*, hereafter, will contain illustrations of two or more new styles, for which patterns will be supplied to order. Parties ordering will please use a small sheet of plain writing-paper, small enough to go into an ordinary envelope, write name very plainly and give post-office and State, together with street and number, wherever necessary. Be careful to give correct bust-measure and the number of the pattern desired, using the number under the illustration. Inclose ten cents in stamps for each pattern ordered. State that you are a reader of the *Ledger*, otherwise these patterns will cost you 25, 30 or 35 cents each, as the case may be, these being the regular prices for which the patterns are sold.

The patterns selected for illustration in this issue are numbered 6705, 6703, 6671 and 6693.

Ladies' Shirt Waist.

Persian printed lawn made this stylish shirt waist, the collar and cuffs being of fine white linen. The fronts and back fit smoothly at the top, a pointed yoke facing that can be made with or without a center seam being stitched across the shoulders on back. A box plait is formed on right front, through which bottonholes are worked to close with studs or buttons. Tapes are inserted in a casing at the waist-line in the back and tied in front to regulate the fullness, the lower edge being hemmed and worn under the skirt. A narrow belt encircles the waist. The neck is finished by a turndown collar, and closes with double studs or buttons. Full gigot shirt sleeves are gathered at top and bottom, on each side of the slashed openings, the fullness at the wrists being joined to straight cuffs that are closed with link buttons. Shirt waists in this style are made of striped and plain batiste, grass linen, percale, madras, cotton cheviot and other plain and fancy shirtings, with collar and cuffs to match, or of white linen, as here illustrated.



6705—LADIES' SHIRT WAIST.

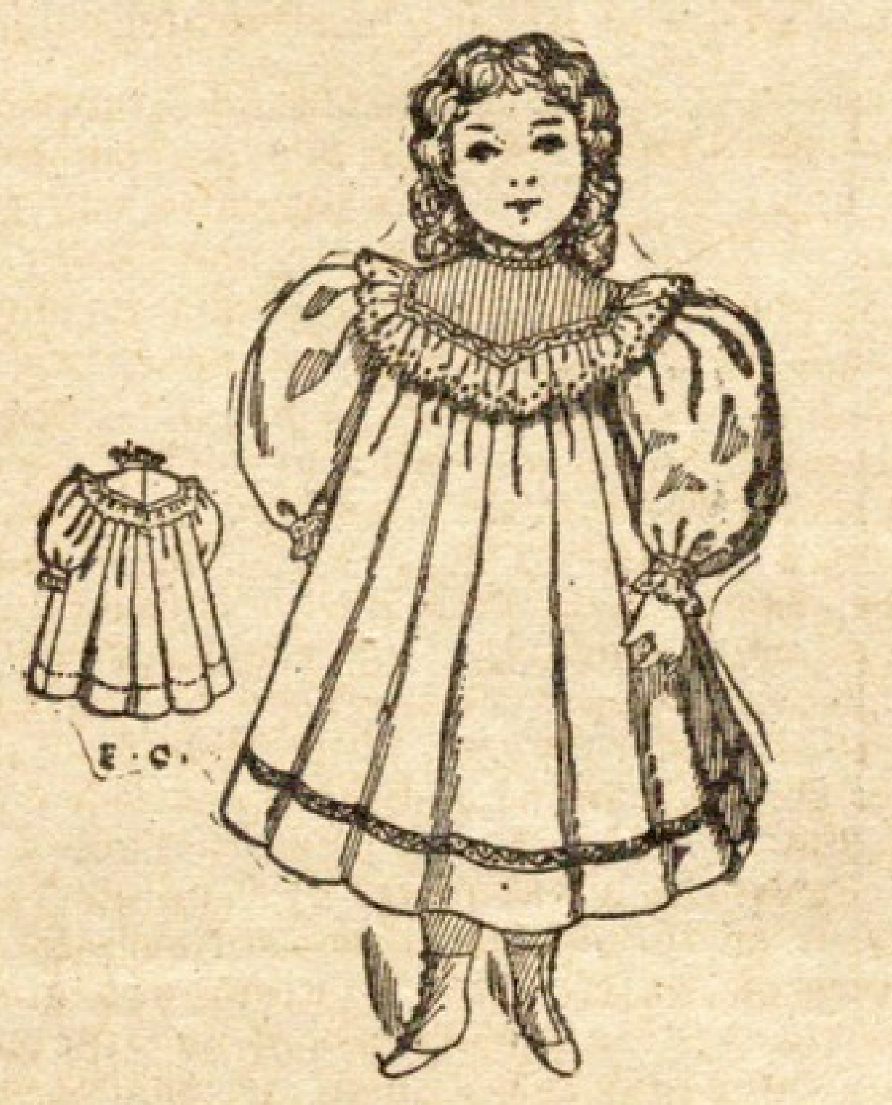
Pattern **6705** is cut in six sizes: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure.

The quantity of material 36 inches wide required to make this shirt waist for a lady having a 36-inch bust measure is 3½ yards.

Retail price of pattern **6705** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Child's Dress With Pointed Yoke.

Plain, white lawn, fine tucking, insertion and embroidered edging in two different widths made this pretty frock, which is a model of neatness and simplicity. The pointed yoke is cut from the tucking, fitted by shoulder seams, and closes in back with tiny pearl buttons and buttonholes. The full, straight skirt is gathered at the top and joined to the lower edge of yoke, a deep hem finishing the lower edge of skirt, at the top of which a row of insertion is placed. A frill of embroidery outlines the yoke all around, that is headed by the insertion. The full bishop sleeves are gathered top and bottom, being completed at the wrists with bands of insertion and frills of narrow embroidery, the same finish being used for the neck. Fine cambric, percale, dimity, nainsook or China silk will develop daintily by the mode. All-over embroidery can be used for the yoke, or lace edging and insertion can take the place of the embroidery here illustrated. This is a desirable pattern for baby's first short dresses, and can be made up as plainly or decorated as handsomely as desired.



6693—CHILDS' DRESS WITH POINTED YOKE.

Pattern **6693** is cut in five sizes, viz.: six months, one, two, four and six years of age.

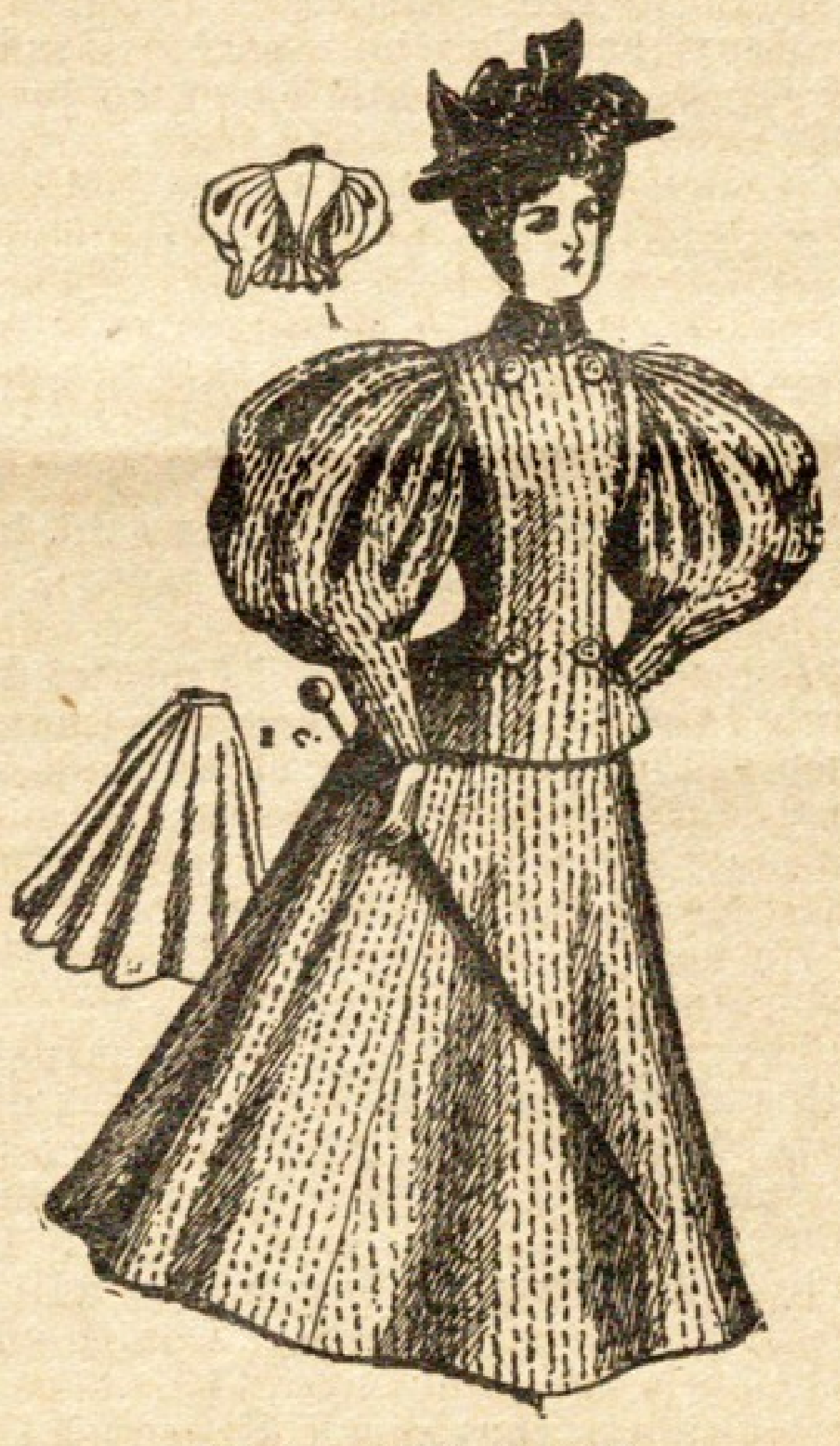
Quantity of Material 36 Inches Wide.

For Child 2 years old..............2¼ yds.

Retail price of pattern **6693** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Ladies' Jacket and Skirt.

Olive and black fancy bouclé cloth made this stylish spring suit, the collar and pocket laps being faced with velvet. Large fancy buttons close the double-breasted fronts, and the seams of the mandolin sleeves are piped with velvet. The jacket is extremely chic, and the mode is becoming to all figures. The loose-fitting fronts are lapped widely in double-breasted style, the back and sides fitting smoothly to just below the waist-line, where each section is sprung to give the stylish ripple or fluted effect now fashionable. The gored sleeves are in three sections, the upper seams being joined with velvet piping. The fullness at the top is laid in two box plaits, with forward and backward turning plaits on each side. Pocket laps that conceal pockets inserted on each front are faced to within half an inch of the edge with velvet, the high rolling collar being faced to match. Small buttons to match the large ones are placed in a row at each wrist. The fashionable skirt is of ample but not extravagant width, measuring a little over four and a half yards at the foot. It consists of five gores, two in back, one on each side, and one in frout, the placket being finished at the top of the center-back seam. *Fin-de-siecle* spring outfits have all at least one walking suit in this style, the jacket being worn over a blouse waist of silk that matches its lining. An interlining can be added for additional warmth, if necessary, and the petticoat made of the same silk as the blouse and jacket lining. Mohair, crépon, cheviot, serge, tweed and other wool suitings in checks, bouclé or mixed effects will all develop stylishly by the made.



6703—LADIES' JACKET.
6671— " SKIRT.

Pattern **6703** is cut in six sizes, viz.: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure.

Quantity of material 44 inches wide required for jacket 36 inches bust measure is 2¾ yards.

Retail price of jacket pattern **6703** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Skirt pattern **6671** is cut in five sizes, viz.: 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inches waist measure.

To make the skirt it will require of the same width material 4½ yards for a medium-size lady.

Retail price of pattern **6671** is 30 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

The Early Garden. A philosopher made a very wise remark when he said: "If you want to train a child properly, begin with his grandparents." The gardener will tell you if you want a successful garden, work for several years ahead. To take a crude, unprepared soil and expect to make a fertile and productive garden at short range, as it were, is a sadly mistaken idea. This may do on new soil under favorable conditions, but the average garden is not to be handled in this way. Where there is plenty of space, it is an excellent idea to allow half of it to grow up in grass for a couple of seasons. Then, when the sod is well formed, put in a large plow, and in the fall turn the soil up so that the clods will freeze and become thoroughly disintegrated. Very few persons except professional gardeners and thorough farmers realize the benefit of fall plowing. If the place is too small to plow, have it spaded, but leave the soil in lumps as much as possible, and avoid the smoothing and leveling process that usually follows this form of stirring the soil.

After remaining in this condition all winter, a spading-fork for a small garden-patch will be all that is required. The earth may be lightly turned over and raked down and planted very much earlier than would be possible if one must wait for plowing. In ground prepared in this way one may plant peas, beets and onions while yet the frosty winds sweep over the earth, and in defiance of late spring snows.

One of the most successful gardeners takes advantage of an early thaw to plow a few furrows in his garden. In this he sows peas for the first crop, and more than once the young vines have been almost covered with snow, but yet are scarcely damaged. Indeed, it is rather a benefit than otherwise, and crops put in on this plan come to use a good many days earlier than if one waits for settled weather.

Every farm and garden should have its cold frames or hot beds. A couple of sashes and a few hours' work costs but little, and the gain in time and the sturdiness of plants will amply repay this.

There is a custom nowadays of potting plants of various sorts, and last season a great many tomato plants were sold in pots, and when they were to be put into the ground, had blossoms and young fruit already considerably advanced. Other vegetables may be managed in the same way with equally good results. Cauliflower and cabbage plants do finely, and one may have cucumber plants with young fruit growing before putting in the ground. Indeed, it is becoming the practice of some of the very best gardeners to start many plants in places where they can be kept constantly under their eyes. By this means the depredations of insects are almost entirely prevented, and the plants get strength and hardiness by proper handling that insures rapid growth when once they are put into the soil.

An experiment was made with potatoes. A dozen ten-inch pots were filled with suitable earth, and the potatoes put in and kept in a reasonably warm place until they came up; then they were gradually exposed to a lower temperature, and given an abundance of light. When they were put into the ground the tops were ten or twelve inches high, and the stalks were of that dark, rich green which is the delight of every gardener's heart. The potatoes were fifteen to twenty days earlier than those planted in the ground.

While it might not be possible for all persons to do this sort of planting on any extensive scale, it is not out of their power to prepare a few pots or boxes, and so manage a few of them that they will come into the ground as soon as the weather will permit, and at this stage they may be half or two-thirds grown. For potatoes, one farmer has gathered all of the old grape and fruit baskets he could find, lined them with pieces of old cloth and started the plants in them. At planting time basket and all went into the gronnd, without the vegetables being disturbed in the least. The roots soon worked through the cloth, and found excellent food in the decaying wood of the basket.

There are paper pots now in market that cost almost nothing, and in these the seeds are put, and when the proper time arrives they are planted, paper and all. A little extra work and careful attention given at the right time, will advance the garden days, if not weeks, and provide the family with delicate vegetables when they are most needed and most highly appreciated.

Delicious Buns. One pound of butter, one and a quarter pounds of sugar, two pounds of flour, six eggs, four tablespoonfuls of ground cinnamon. Mix the cinnamon into the flour; rub the butter to a cream, then mix the flour with it. Beat the sugar with the eggs, then all together as little as possible. Distribute this by the spoonful into rough-looking cakes on buttered tins placed a little distance apart. These are very nice for lunch

Orange Snowballs. Boil some rice for ten minutes; drain and let it cool. Pare some oranges, taking off all the thick white skin; spread the rice in as many portions as there are oranges on some pudding or dumpling cloths; tie the fruit (surrounded with the rice) separately in these and boil the balls for an hour. Turn them carefully on a dish, sprinkle well with sifted sugar. Serve with any kind of sauce or sweetened cream.

Spice Cake. Stir two-thirds of a cup of butter and two-thirds of a cup of sugar together. Then add three well-beaten eggs, two-thirds of a cup of molasses, and stir well. Add two and one-half generous cups of flour, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one tablespoonful of mixed spices—cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg—a tiny pinch of salt, and lastly a cup of milk. Bake slowly in a rather shallow tin.

Potato Pancakes. Boil six medium-sized potatoes in salted water until thoroughly cooked. Wash them and set aside to cool. Then add three well-beaten eggs, a quart of milk, and flour enough to make a pancake batter. Bake quickly on a well-greased griddle, and serve very hot.

Almond Jumbles. One pound of sugar, one half pound of butter, one pound of almonds blanched and chopped fine, two eggs, flour enough to mix stiff. Roll thin. Moisten the top of each one with the white of an egg and sprinkle with sugar. Bake quickly.

Indian Corn Pudding. Scald a quart of milk and stir in seven tablespoonfuls of sifted corn-meal, a teaspoonful of salt, one teacupful of molasses and a tablespoonful of ginger. Bake three hours.

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which is now, and has been for more than forty years, the most reliable dressing for **Ladies' and Children's Boots and Shoes.** An indispensable article that every lady should have in the house. Ask your dealer for **BROWN'S** and take no other.

A Secret of the Heart.*

BY HOWARD FIELDING.

CHAPTER I.

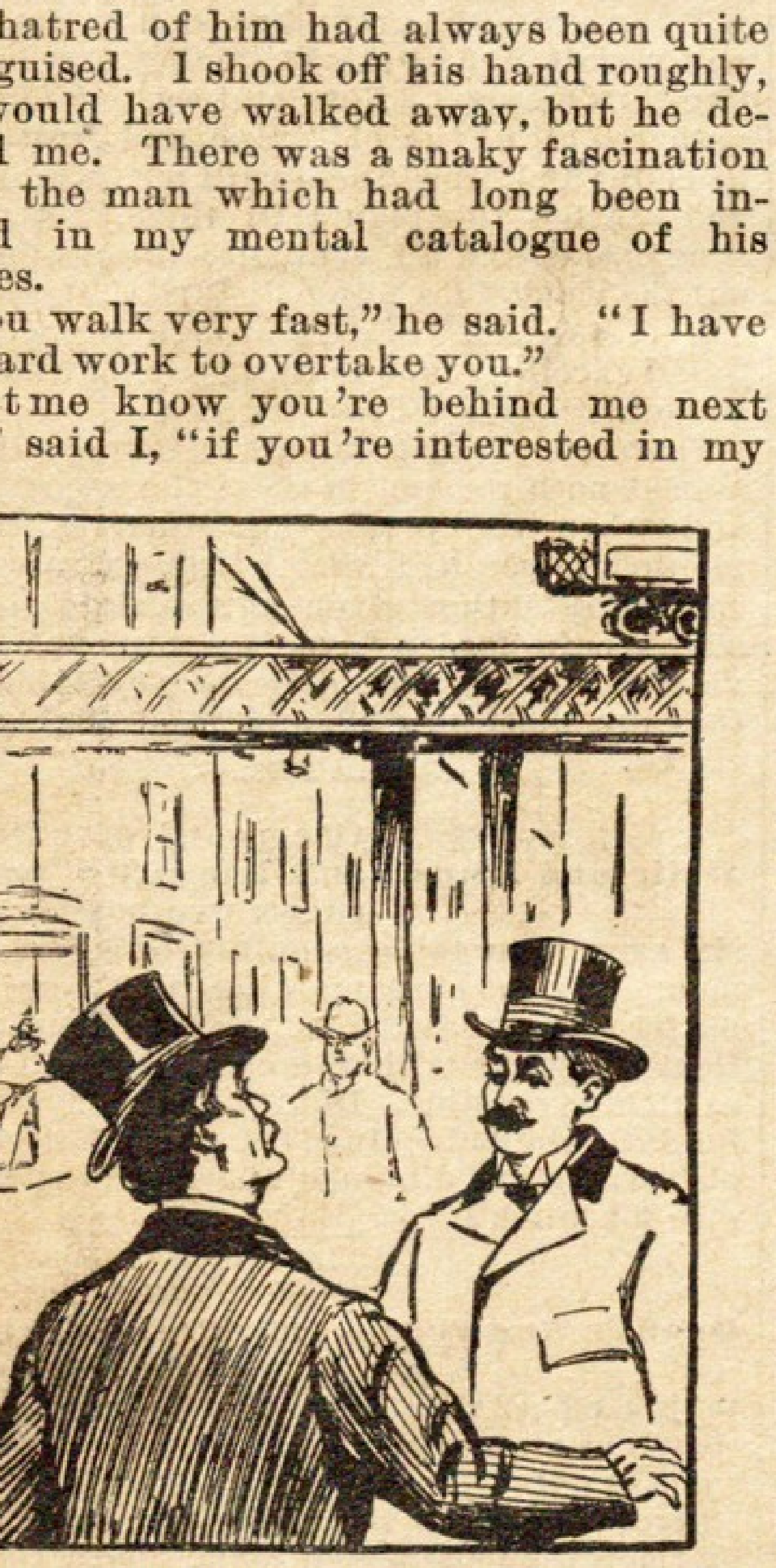
MY ENEMY.

As I entered the Ann Street Bank building some one touched me on the arm; and I turned to face George Stalbridge. I knew it was Stalbridge before I saw him, before I heard his voice. The creature had an atmosphere such as is said to surround an evil spirit. If it had been consistent with my creed, I should have crossed myself when I perceived him.

My hatred of him had always been quite undisguised. I shook off his hand roughly, and would have walked away, but he detained me. There was a snaky fascination about the man which had long been included in my mental catalogue of his offenses.

"You walk very fast," he said. "I have had hard work to overtake you."

"Let me know you're behind me next time," said I, "if you're interested in my pedestrianism. Now, don't detain me. I am going upstairs to see Mr. Davis, and I have no time to waste upon his evil genius."



"WHAT'S THE MATTER?" I DEMANDED, SHARPLY.

"Why do you speak so to me?" he asked, not at all in anger. "Come, let's have it out to-day. What have you against me?"

"Do you want me to go over all that again?" I demanded. "Well, so be it. There is a new count in the indictment to-day, and I have a curiosity to hear how you will answer it."

We still stood in the main hall of the great building. It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon, a busy hour there, and scores of persons were passing in and out.

"No," said he, reading my thought, "it won't do to talk here. Let us go somewhere else."

He put his hand upon my arm again, in a most friendly fashion, and led me toward the street.

It is positively painful to entertain for any human being the feeling which I had for him. The eye of a stranger lit upon us walking thus together, and I cowed as one detected in a shameful action. It was not for his reputation, because that was good, as reputations go in New York. He was called a first-rate business man, and truly, for he succeeded, and that is the recognized test.

In the old days it was his personal appearance that set me against him. He was tall, thin and high-shouldered, having the look of one who had drawn himself up to the uttermost that he may pounce down the harder upon something lying before him. His face was bony, and the upper part was a skin over a skull. He had a most distressing habit of lifting his matted and seemingly abundant hair with his hand in such a way as to show that the top of his head was really quite bald. The long hair rooted at the back merely lay upon it in a mass.

On the occasion in question there was something to be gained by talking with this man, and so I stifled my disgust of him. He had been for many years the close business associate of my uncle, Mr. Willard Davis, upon whom it had been my intention to call when I visited the bank building.

"My uncle has read the papers this morning, I suppose," said I.

Stalbridge brought his jaws together with a snap, and grinned like a skull.

"They are rather hard upon us," he said. "It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the negotiations between the Union Surface lines and the Twenty-seventh Street Company have been divulged. The public never understands such things."

"The public understands them perfectly," I replied, angrily. "The public knows that the Union has got its grip upon the smaller company and has squeezed it to death; that every man who has put a dollar into the Twenty-seventh Street road will lose it—has lost it, in fact—and that the whole transaction is a mass of political bribery, commercial dishonesty and evasion of law. I am not yet sure that the law has been successfully evaded; but whether it has or not, I certainly believe that if my uncle does not shake you off within a year, he will overstep the mark and disgrace the family name. Stalbridge, you reptile, what is the secret of your influence over him?"

"I have no influence," he replied. "I am only his employee. You know very well that I am really no more than a confidential clerk."

"I know the contrary," said I. "Can you deny that this whole surface-road conspiracy was devised and executed by yourself?"

"Some matters of detail were, indeed, left to me," he began; but I interrupted him, angrily:

"The truth is not in you!" I cried. "I know very well what your part in this has been. It is the last of fifty such schemes, every one of which—"

"Made your uncle richer," he said, breaking in upon me. "He is now many times a millionaire."

"I'm not so sure of that," I returned. "It would interest me a great deal to know how much of those dishonest gains stands in his name and how much in yours. I mistake you most seriously if you have not taken the lion's share."

"He has been generous with me," said Stalbridge; "but I am not rich—yet."

"There has been one conspicuous instance in this city," said I, "in which a rascal like yourself, who started with nothing but a rich man's favor, in twenty years absorbed almost all his patron's vast fortune. If my uncle lives five years longer, you will have him at your mercy, and his wealth will lie in the hollow of your hand."

"Let us hope that he will live much longer than that," rejoined Stalbridge, with unwonted feeling. "It would be idle to deny that I hope to profit by his continued favor."

I laughed bitterly. The fact was that this man was fastened upon my uncle like a leech, and was bleeding him royally.

"You expect to be made president of the Union lines now, I suppose?" said I, with a sneer.

"I had thought," he replied, "that Mr. Davis would give that office to his future son-in-law, Mr. Walter Norman."

As he spoke he started slightly, as one who suddenly notes some trivial coincidence. He almost stopped. I wheeled about to face him, and observed that his eyes were raised so that he looked over my head. There was nothing particularly interesting in that direction. The elevated railroad structure crossed Vesey Street at that point, and an uptown train was rattling along. But Stalbridge was not the sort of man to stare at so commonplace a spectacle.

"What's the matter?" I demanded, sharply.

"Nothing of consequence," he replied. "I happened to remember something. Let me see; what were we speaking of?"

"Of Walter Norman, whom you have just ruined by this deal," I said. "That is the most mysterious part of it. I cannot understand how you persuaded my uncle to do this thing when Norman, as the principal stockholder in the Twenty-seventh Street company, was sure to be terribly involved. Of one thing I am certain: Norman had no suspicion of the way things stood as between the two companies. He relied entirey upon his relations with my uncle's family to save him."

"Miss Davis's fortune will be ample to requite him for any loss he may suffer," said Stalbridge. "Her father will, of course, deal liberally with her when she marries. And besides, as I have already said, I think it is his intention to fix Norman all right when the consolidated stock is issued. I repeat that I expect to see him president of the Union."

"That is an absurd falsehood," I retorted. "You are trying to drive him to desperation that you may break off the match. If it were conceivable that she would accept you, I should believe that you had designs upon my cousin's hand."

"She is a charming woman," said Stalbridge, calmly.

I was anxious to break off the conversation. My object in talking with Stalbridge had already been attained. I had wished to learn what was going to happen to Norman in this bad business of the absorption of his enterprise by that which my uncle nominally, but Stalbridge actually, guided. I knew Stalbridge's methods so well that I was able to judge of the truth or falsity of what he had said about my uncle's intentions toward Norman. I perceived that he had come as near the truth as he ever did; that my uncle was going to make reparation to Norman unless Stalbridge succeeded in preventing him from doing so. That the rascal for once distrusted his power over my uncle and feared that Norman's interests would be guarded, I could read in his eyes. It was, then, time for me to go upon the mission that had brought me downtown; which was to see my uncle and plead Norman's cause.

As a matter of fact, I knew that that cause needed all my effort. My uncle's consent to the marriage was a thing not to be depended upon. I had been surprised when it had been dragged out of him; and I looked for him to change his mind at any moment.

I turned about abruptly, and began to walk back toward the Ann Street bank building. Stalbridge kept by my side. I could not shake him off. We entered the building together, by the side door, which is very little used, as there is no elevator in that hall.

My uncle's room was on the third floor at the rear. The Union lines had gorgeous offices at the front; my uncle's room was hidden away. There was no name on the door. Nobody else but Stalbridge had a desk there, even the harmless, necessary typewriter being banished.

Stalbridge knocked. That was his invariable custom, and it gave me a bad impression of the room, as a place where secret meetings were held—meetings of two where neither dared permit a witness to be present.

There was no answer to Stalbridge's knock.

"Mr. Davis must have gone out," he said. "Will you wait for him?"

He drew out his key and tried to put it into the lock, but it met an obstacle.

"There's a key on the inside," he whispered. "He must be there, after all."

At that moment I heard something fall with a faint ring on the carpet within, and following that sound there came a low, sobbing cry, and then a crash.

Stalbridge, who, because of his strange stature, was bending over the lock, suddenly straightened up, and turned almost around. He leaned against the door. I had never seen a live man's face look as his looked then. The hound was thoroughly frightened.

I seized the key out of his hand, unlocked the door, and flung it open. As I did so, a door upon the other side of the room closed with a snap. This I perceived mechanically, for my gaze was riveted upon my uncle.

He was on his knees beside his desk, his face turned toward me. One hand clutched the desk for support; the other was pressed upon his breast.

He knew me—I could read it in his eyes. He tried to speak, but only gasped, and then fell forward on his face.

Death proclaimed himself in that heavy fall. Even the manner of it was evident, at least to my eye, which is not wholly untrained.

I knew that my uncle had died of a wound from a sharp-pointed weapon. Instantly I knelt by his side and turned him upon his back. The rush of blood was dreadful. It came straight from the heart,

All the world could not help him. My thought flashed to the murderer, and I remembered the closing of that door on the instant of our entrance. I sprang toward it; beat it down, and rushed into the little room beyond.

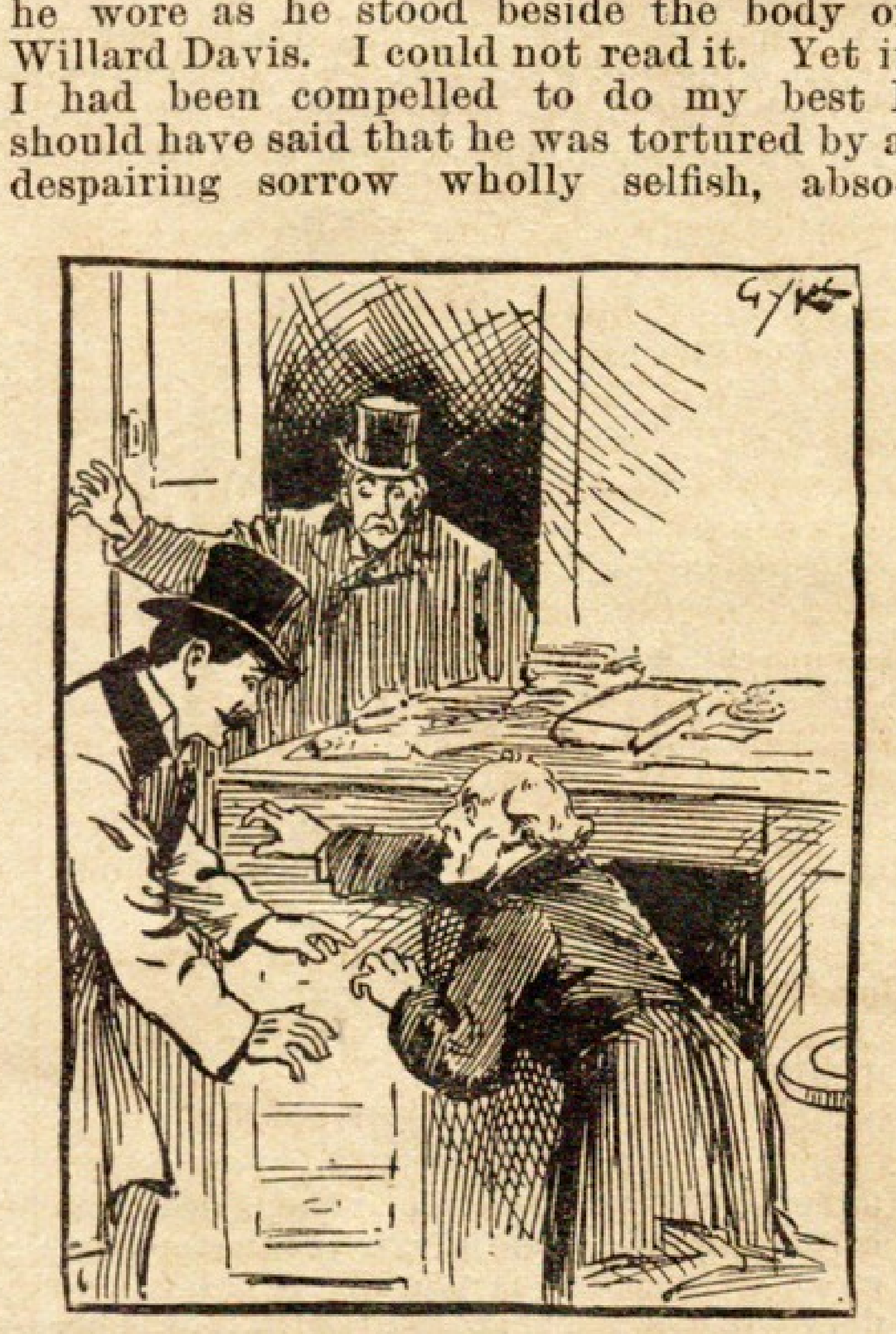
It was entirely empty. There was no other door but that by which I had entered. I ran to an open window, and looked down a sheer wall to a paved court.

Mystified, I turned back to the large room where Stalbridge stood staring down upon the corpse of his benefactor.

CHAPTER II.

AN ORDINARY, EVERYDAY DETECTIVE.

Self-satisfaction was the only strong emotion that I had ever seen in Stalbridge's face up to that moment. That expression I had learned to recognize, and I could even draw safe inferences from the degree of its manifestation. But it was a new face that he wore as he stood beside the body of Willard Davis. I could not read it. Yet if I had been compelled to do my best I should have said that he was tortured by a despairing sorrow wholly selfish, absolutely unmixed with any human sympathy for the man whose awful end we had both witnessed.



HE KNEW ME—I COULD READ IT IN HIS EYES.

I could readily understand that the death of my uncle was a terrible blow to Stalbridge, whose dearest schemes were dependent upon his patron; and I could expect nothing better of the man than that he should think of himself alone, even in the presence of so terrible a tragedy.

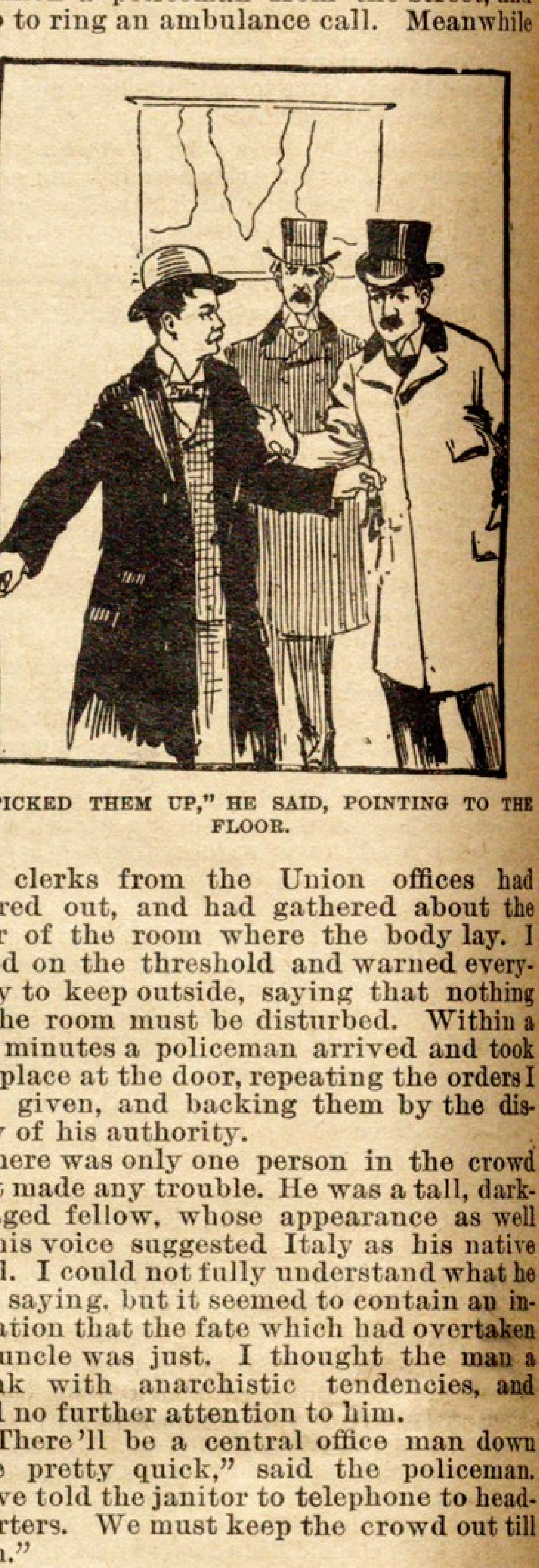
"Stabbed to the heart!" I cried, bending over the body. "Who could have done this?"

Stalbridge motioned toward the door.

"Get help," he said, hoarsely.

At this moment a boy in the janitor's employ looked into the room and, at the sight of the corpse, fled in terror. I cried out after him that the police must be summoned; that Mr. Davis had been murdered, and that the assassin had escaped by the window. It is doubtful whether the frightened boy heard me; and, as a matter of fact, I shouted for the purpose of raising a general alarm and not for the boy's information. The cry passed from mouth to mouth along the corridors, and scores of persons were instantly running about, some toward my uncle's office and others toward the windows that commanded a view of the court into which it was at once supposed that the murderer had leaped.

I heard the janitor call to some one to summon a policeman from the street, and also to ring an ambulance call. Meanwhile the clerks from the Union offices had poured out, and had gathered about the door of the room where the body lay. I stood on the threshold and warned everybody to keep outside, saying that nothing in the room must be disturbed. Within a few minutes a policeman arrived and took my place at the door, repeating the orders I had given, and backing them by the display of his authority.



"I PICKED THEM UP," HE SAID, POINTING TO THE FLOOR.

There was only one person in the crowd that made any trouble. He was a tall, dark-visaged fellow, whose appearance as well as his voice suggested Italy as his native land. I could not fully understand what he was saying, but it seemed to contain an intimation that the fate which had overtaken my uncle was just. I thought the man a crank with anarchistic tendencies, and paid no further attention to him.

"There'll be a central office man down here pretty quick," said the policeman. "I've told the janitor to telephone to headquarters. We must keep the crowd out till then."

We succeeded without difficulty. Nobody was admitted but the ambulance surgeon, who had been summoned, and Vice-President Rodney, of the Union lines, who was too important a person to be excluded.

Stalbridge, meanwhile, had remained standing like a statue beside my uncle's dead body, gazing down at it. He did not move when the ambulance surgeon knelt to make his examination. It was quickly done, and he disturbed as little as possible the position of the corpse.

"There are two wounds here," he said, in response to my questions. "One is upon the right side of the head. It was made by a glancing blow from some heavy instrument having an edge, but not sharp like a knife. The blow may have stunned him, but it would not have killed him. The second wound was a stab with a small, round and sharp-pointed instrument, like a stiletto. It entered the right breast between the seventh and eighth ribs, and seems to have penetrated the heart. It must have caused almost instant death."

"Yet he was alive when we entered," I cried in horror, glancing at Stalbridge. "We had the murderer under our very hands and we let him escape."

Stalbridge answered with a groan. I looked at him, but he did not meet my eyes; he was still staring at the corpse. The thought came to me that if this man had not stopped me in the hall, I should have been with my uncle and could have saved him. Unreasonable as it was, I reproached him for what he had done.

"Fate, fate!" he muttered, still without looking at me. "Who could have dreamed of this?"

"It needed no prophet," I retorted, bitterly. "For years, under your direction, Willard Davis had made enemies—bitter enemies—for there is no strife more desperate than this battle for money. How many men have you ruined with your schemes? Run them over in your mind, and tell me, if you can, which one of your victims struck this blow. Then blame yourself for it!"

"This is hardly fair," whispered Rodney, laying his hand upon my shoulder.

I turned toward him, and saw that there were tears in his eyes. He was a hard-fisted man of business, seasoned by thirty years of struggling in New York. His emotion affected me. My unreasonable anger abated; it gave way to grief. I had felt sincere affection for my uncle, though his course of late years had excited my strenuous opposi-

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tion. We were of an old and honored family, and I held our name to be of more consequence than mere money-getting. Though he was much older than myself, I had ventured to remonstrate with him at times when Stalbridge's schemes secured unenviable note; but there had been no open quarrel, and I had always been at home in his house.

With this thought came the recollection of my duty to my uncle's family. They should be informed at once, and the painful task was surely mine. I spoke of this to Rodney, and he said that I should go at once. I shuddered when I pictured the grief of my aunt and my cousin Emily, who has been already mentioned as the betrothed of Walter Norman. There was a son, too, who must be summoned from college by this terrible news.

As I was about to leave the room, the detective from police headquarters arrived. His promptitude amazed me. I would have said that scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since the commission of the crime. In reality the interval had been much longer. Also, as subsequently appeared, one of the tenants in the building had notified the central office on the first alarm.

The detective was in appearance the most absolutely commonplace man that I had ever seen. Perhaps I was expecting the detective of romance, and thus derived an added impression of the ordinary from this man, Johnson. He was about the medium height, and his face was of so conventional a type that I began to wonder vaguely whether I had seen him before. His expression was somewhat vacant, but not with the vacancy of stupidity, rather with the listlessness of a man who has nothing to do and very little to think about. He was dressed in the sort of clothes that one will see the most of, if he walks about the city all day.

"Excuse me," he said, politely. "If you're not really in a hurry, I'd like to ask a few questions before you go."

He asked but very few, and seemed almost indifferent to my answers. Indeed, his indifference piqued me, and I was the more careful to tell my story accurately and to bring out all the points. I succeeded in arousing a certain amount of interest when I told him of the closing door, and of my pursuit of the murderer; but he ceased to pay attention to me when I said that I had failed to get a glimpse of the escaping criminal.

"Whose are these?" he asked, languidly, displaying a large number of keys on a ring.

"My uncle's," I exclaimed. "Where did you get them?"

"I picked them up," he said, pointing to the floor near the door which led to the hall.

"The murderer must have taken them from my uncle's pocket and locked the door immediately after the commission of the crime," I said. "We found it locked."

"That is the way of it, of course," said Johnson. "There are bloodstains on the door and the casing, as you have doubtless observed."

I had not seen them, but when Johnson pointed them out they were obvious.

"He washed his hand afterward," Johnson continued. "There is the towel on which he wiped them."

He pointed at the towel in question, which was thrown over the corner of a looking-glass that hung upon the wall.

"Why did he throw it up there?" I muttered half to myself.

"It was not thrown," said Johnson. "You can see that. It was hung up there."

The top of the looking-glass, which was a very large one, was nearly eight feet from the floor.

"He must have been a giant," I exclaimed, "to reach so high."

"A tall man, probably," said Johnson. "Has anybody meddled with the towel, the rack under it, the bowl, or anything else hereabouts?"

"Nothing has been disturbed," said Stalbridge.

Johnson examined the bowl.

"No blood here," he said; "the water is perfertly clean."

He pointed into the bowl, where there was a little water. On looking more closely than Johnson had done, I was able to discover a few spots of blood at the upper edge of the bowl where the horizontal slab was set over it. When Johnson's attention was called to them, he scanned them closely.

I had begun to feel considerable respect for the detective's ability. The quiet way in which he had possessed himself of the keys without attracting anybody's attention had excited my curiosity, and had led me to believe that there was more in him than appeared upon the surface. But when I had demonstrated the superiority of my own observation over his, I began to hold him cheap. If I had been the criminal I should have feared Stalbridge far more. His acuteness was well known, and his appetite for revenge equaled that of a savage. He had suffered deeply by my uncle's death, and he would never rest, I felt assured, until he had seen the author of that injury in the hands of the executioner.

"Have you formed any theory of the crime?" I asked Stalbridge.

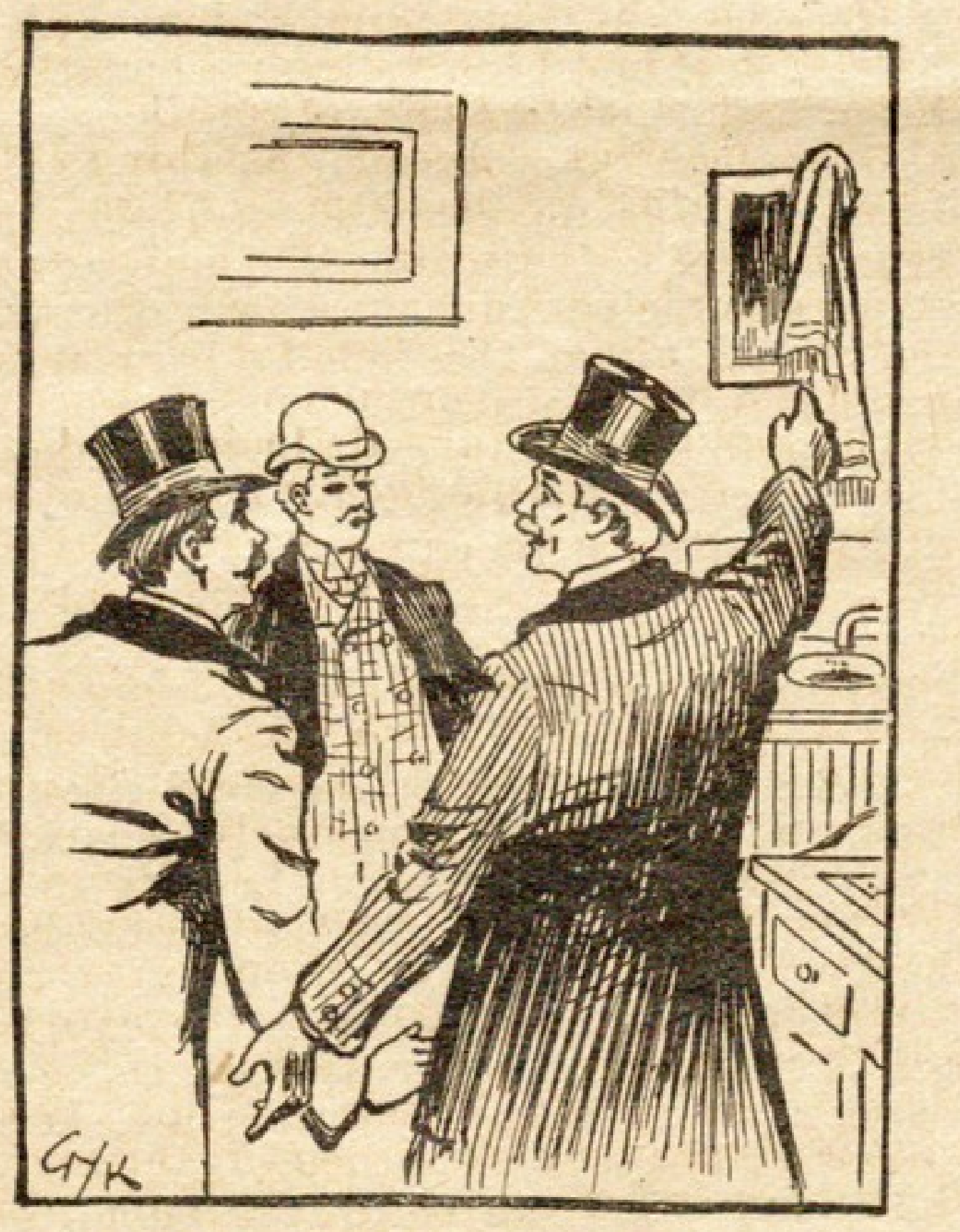
He did not answer.

"What do you think about it?" the detective asked of me.

"I am puzzled by one circumstance," said I. "The surgeon tells me that my uncle was stabbed to the heart. Therefore the murder must have been committed within a very few seconds. Indeed, I believe that I heard my uncle cry when the blow was struck. How, then, could the murderer have washed the blood from his hands? We entered at once."

"That's just the point that bothered me at first," said Johnson, "but it's clear enough now. The wound in the head was inflicted first. It was the blood from that wound which stained the murderer's hands. He washed them, and probably he was on the point of leaving the room when you came, and blocked his escape. At the same moment, your uncle, who had been lying unconscious and was supposed by the criminal to be dead, regained his senses. He staggered to his feet. The criminal, as he fled across the room to reach the other where the window is, was confronted by his victim. Then he struck the second and fatal blow, and escaped as Mr. Davis fell dying. How does that strike you, gentlemen?"

He looked at us with frank inquiry. There was nothing of the typical air of mystery about him. His method, as any one could see, was to ask questions and put the facts together, taking all the help he could get. I regarded his theory as very strong, and my confidence in him was restored.



"YOUR FRIEND NORMAN IS A VERY TALL MAN."

"But the motive?" said I.

"It was undoubtedly robbery," said the detective. "You will observe that there is blood upon these papers on the desk. It will be found on examination that one which should be there is missing. Then we shall have a real clue to the murderer."

Stalbridge sprang toward the desk. He hurriedly scanned the papers.

"You are right," he said. "There is a paper missing; and its disappearance will be very convenient for the Twenty-seventh Street railroad people."

He turned to me with a gleam of intelligent triumph in his eyes; and then pointed to the towel over the corner of the glass.

"Your friend Norman is a very tall man," he said; "six feet tall, I believe."

CHAPTER III.

MR. STALBRIDGE IS AMUSED AND STARTLED.

"Your friend, Mr. Stalbridge, is a wonderful man."

So said Detective Johnson to me on the evening of the day of the murder.

I was too deeply interested in learning what Stalbridge had done to think of protesting against his being called my friend. After leaving the scene of the crime for the purpose of conveying the dreadful news to my aunt and my cousin, I had known scarcely anything of the progress of the case. The detective had promised to report to me at my uncle's house, and I had been impatiently awaiting his coming. It was about eight o'clock when he was shown into the drawing-room, and he responded to my eager question with praise of Stalbridge.

"What has he done?" I demanded. "Has he found the murderer?"

"Not yet," replied the detective, "but he is working down to him rapidly. That man has more than the instinct of a bloodhound. The hound must hunt for the trail, but Mr. Stalbridge knows where the trail is without hunting for it."

"I should view such knowledge with suspicion," said I.

"Oh, come now," retorted Johnson, good-naturedly, "you are doing your friend an injustice! To say nothing of his character, it is impossible to suspect him of any participation in this crime. Certainly nobody could suffer more than he does by the death of Mr. Davis."

"You should see Mr. Davis' daughter," I said, bitterly.

"Is she taking it hard?"

"I never saw such grief. It is heart-rending. She was scarcely in her right mind when I saw her last."

"Mr. Norman is here, I suppose?"

"No, he is not here. We have been unable to find him."

"I had the same luck," said Johnson, some slight token of interest appearing in his mechanically expressionless voice. "I called at his rooms twice."

"What for?" I demanded.

"I hardly knew what for, the first time," he replied; "but the second time I was after this."

He showed me a stiletto with a jeweled handle. I knew it well, having seen it often in Norman's rooms, where there was a rubbishy lot of quaint weapons, with a few that were interesting and valuable.

"Johnson," said I, "if you let Stalbridge induce you to drag Norman into this case, you'll make an awful mistake."

"Mr. Stalbridge doesn't urge it," he replied. "I think he suspects somebody else. But I can't overlook Norman altogether. You see, this railroad business brings him into the case, and if I don't hunt him up, the newspapers will jump on me. That's what we're all afraid of, you know—the newspapers. Now, if you think I am likely to get jumped on worse for arresting Norman than for letting him alone, why I'll act accordingly. I haven't any feeling in the matter; and as for knowing who killed Mr. Davis, or having any suspicion of it, my mind is as empty as a box full of nothing."

"Hasn't anything been done except this foolish business about Norman?" I asked, impatiently.

"Oh, yes; there's the examination by the coroner's physician. I haven't the written report, but I can give you the substance of it. Your opinion regarding the stab-wound was correct. It pierced the heart. Death must have been almost instantaneous. That proves my theory that the fatal blow was struck while you stood outside the door. Ah, good evening, Mr. Stalbridge."

I turned just as the gaunt, high-shouldered figure stalked into the room.

Stalbridge usually so excessively courteous, gave no greeting to either of us. He looked like a man with one idea—vengeance.

"Have you done anything with the fragments of that document?" he demanded of the detective.

"Mrs. Johnson has them, sir," he replied. "She is far cleverer than any man at that sort of work."

"What is this document?" I asked.

"I was just going to tell you about it when Mr. Stalbridge came," said Johnson. "You know my theory of the crime. Mr. Davis was struck down, and then the murderer removed a paper from the desk. The bloodstains on the remaining papers prove this conclusively to my mind. I confess that I had little hope of ever finding that document; but now I believe that we have it in hand."

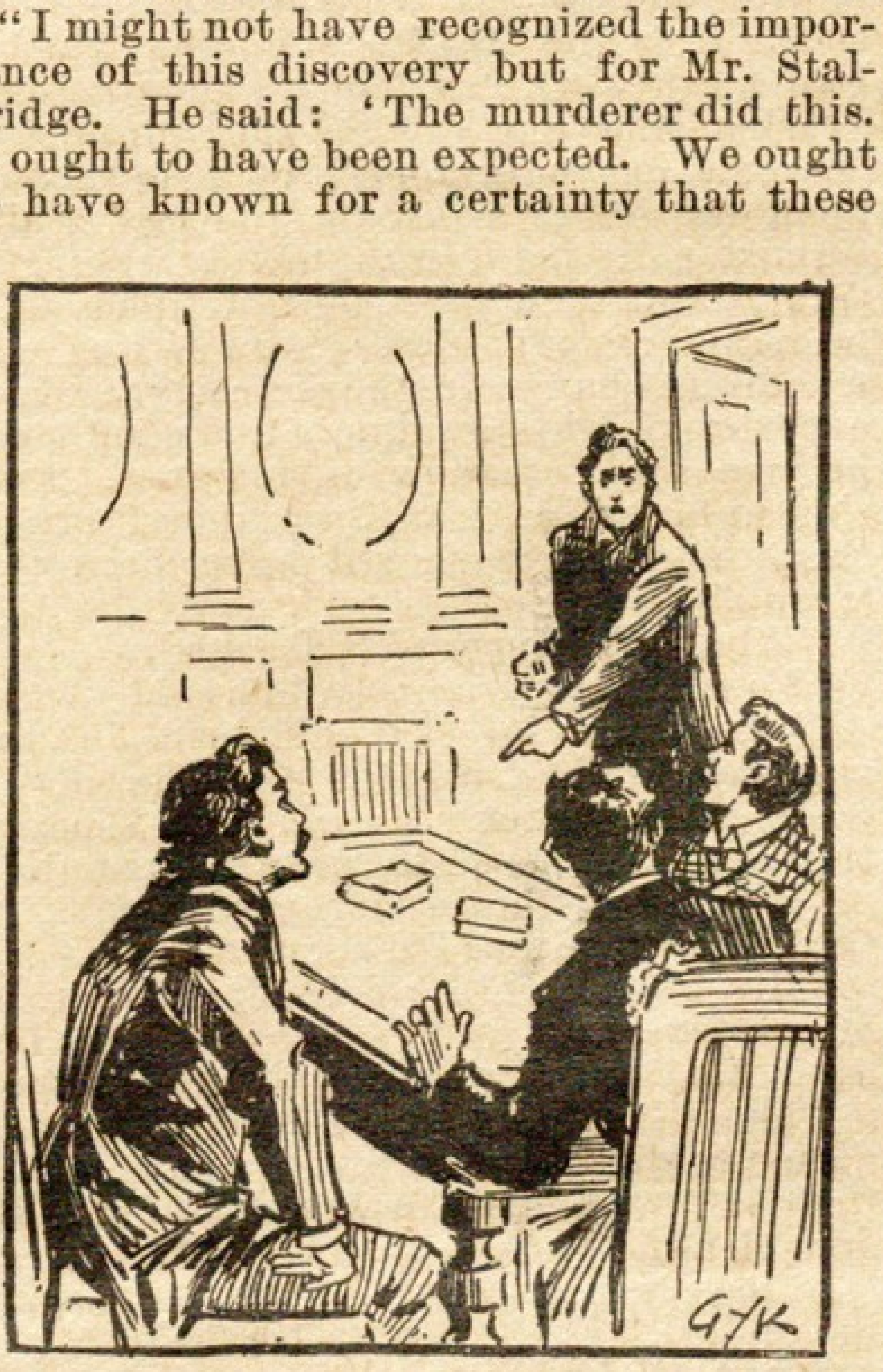
"Where did you find it?"

"Wait a moment. Not so fast. You know how the murderer escaped. By a desperate exercise of agility, aided evidently by the natural advantage of height, he climbed from a window of your uncle's rear room into an unoccupied suite which also had a rear window on the court.

"Naturally, I suggested an examination of those apartments to see whether he had left any clue behind him. Mr. Stalbridge joined me in the search. It was fruitless at first, except that we found all the doors unlocked, showing that the murderer could have had unimpeded passage through the rooms.

"After a careful examination, I was on the point of abandoning the field; but Mr. Stalbridge insisted that there must be something to reward our endeavors. And so there was, for, on the final search I found ten thousand tiny bits of paper in a cupboard under a set-bowl in one of the rooms.

"I might not have recognized the importance of this discovery but for Mr. Stalbridge. He said: 'The murderer did this. It ought to have been expected. We ought to have known for a certainty that these scraps of paper were here. He had committed murder to secure that document. He dared not go out upon the street with it in his pocket for fear of arrest. If he had been taken with this upon him, what could have saved him?'



"YOU LIE, STALBRIDGE; I AM HERE TO DEFEND MYSELF."

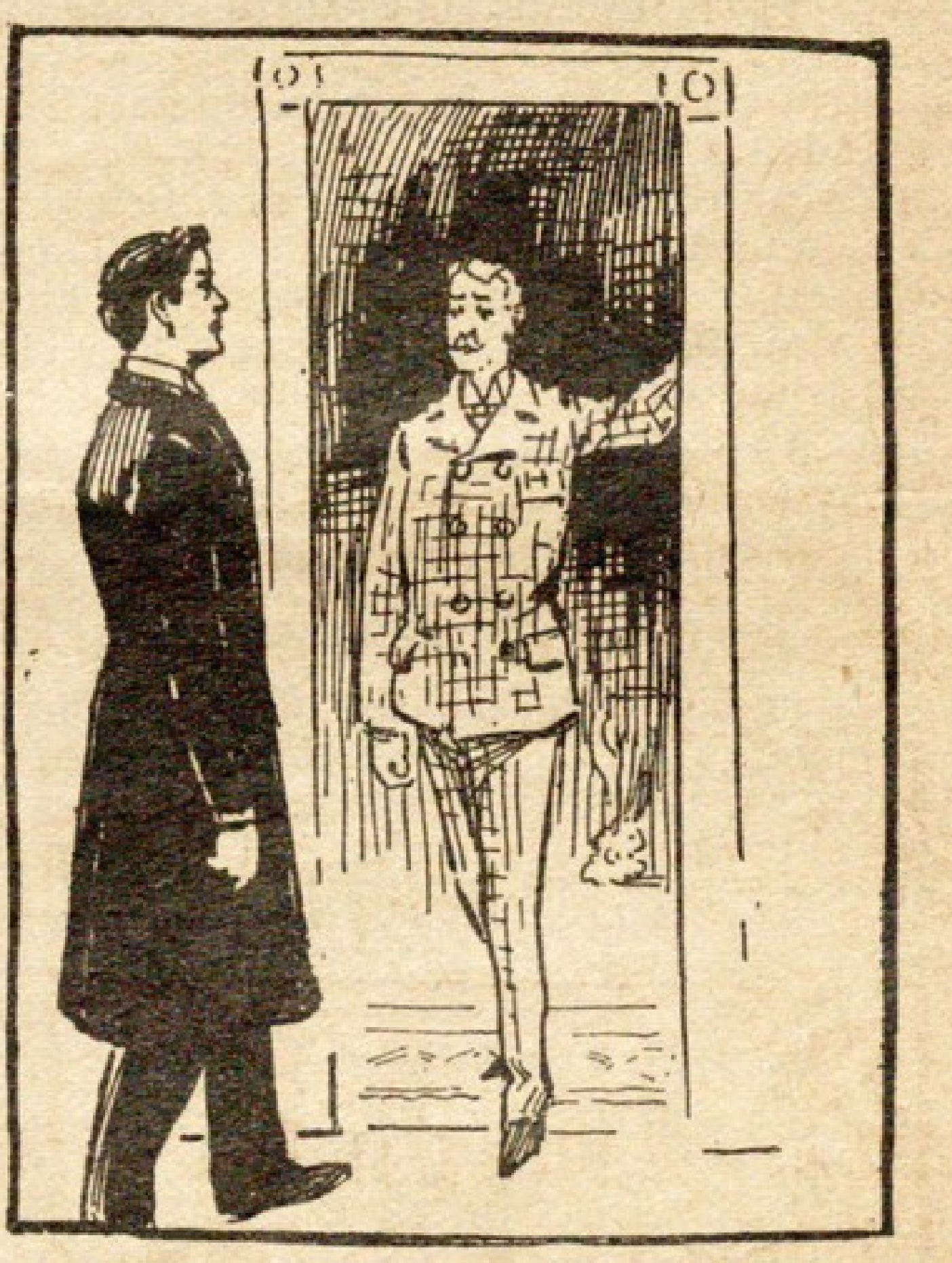
"I was inclined to be skeptical, but an examination of the bits of paper showed me that they once formed part of a legal document. Besides, it was easy to see that they had not been many hours in that place. Moreover, care had been taken to tear the paper into fragments of nearly equal size, so as to prevent any person from putting them together properly."

"It can be done," said Stalbridge; "and I will stake my life that the document proves to be the contract which delivered the Twenty-seventh Street road into our hands. Moreover, Mr. Davis," he continued, addressing me directly, "I have to inform you that your friend Norman has disappeared."

"You lie, Stalbridge," said a deep, intense voice. "I am here to defend myself."

Norman strode into the room. He was almost a giant in stature, and the strength of his facial outline matched the tremendous energy of his form. His cheeks, and even his forehead, were flushed with anger. I knew that he had heard of the suspicion that had been directed toward him; the attempts to find him and the search of his apartments, and that he attributed the injury, rightly, to Stalbridge.

Knowing Norman's high temper, I was afraid that he might do an act of violence which he would regret all his life. I hastily placed myself between them; and just then Johnson said, in his most lifeless tone:



THE DETECTIVE BACKED THROUGH A DOORWAY INTO THE MUSIC ROOM.

"Mr. Norman, I had the pleasure of calling upon you this afternoon when you were not at home, and I took several things out of your room."

The giant uttered a sound like the growling of a tiger, and instantly turned upon the detective. I expected to see Johnson annihilated, but he skillfully retreated from the peril which he had so recklessly invoked. He backed through a doorway into the music room, and Norman followed.

What happened in that room afterwards I am unable to state, but there was no violence. Probably Norman found it impossible to be angry with such an automaton as Johnson.

There was a great deal in my mind, in that moment when I found myself alone with Stalbridge. I saw in him the most dangerous persecutor of my friend, and for that alone I would have opposed him in every possible manner. But I hated him, besides, and to fight against him was a pleasure.

"Stalbridge," said I, "you know Norman to be innocent."

"I know nothing of the kind," he retorted, angrily. "You don't know what you are talking about."

"Wait a bit," I rejoined. "Let me tell you what I mean. When we were walking down Vesey Street, this morning, you mentioned Norman's name, and at that moment you chanced to look up. You started. I turned toward you, and noticed a peculiar expression in your face. I was then too deeply intent upon another matter to understand your look, but a comprehension of its meaning has been growing on me ever since. Stalbridge, you saw Walter Norman in that train which passed us at that moment, and it was the coincidence of seeing him just as his name was on your lips which startled you."

Stalbridge glanced toward the music-room. Johnson had closed the door.

A look of amusement overspread my adversary's countenance. Such a look may run around the circle of the fiends when the red light strikes into a new face.

"This is really humorous," he said in a low tone. "You expect to prove an alibi for Walter Norman by my testimony."

"You do not deny what I assert."

"My dear fellow, is it necessary? Can you expect my conduct to be affected by the circumstance of my seeing or not seeing Mr. Norman at the time you mention? If you had seen him, that would have been a different matter."

"Do you mean to tell me," I demanded, horror-stricken, "that you will let him be condemned for this crime when a word from you can save him?"

"I'm not so sure that he could be saved in the way you suggest," he rejoined. "Suppose that he was on that train; he might have gotten off at Park Place and have reached the Ann Street building ahead of us."

"You stultify yourself," I cried. "Remember that there was a blow struck before the fatal thrust with the dagger; that the criminal locked the door; that he washed his hands; that he stole a paper from the desk. Could all this have been done in the time that Norman would have had, by your supposition?"

"Perhaps not," said Stalbridge, grinning.

"I can see that we are wasting words," said I. "Whatever may be the value of the evidence you could give in his favor, you will not give it."

"Your intellect is unusually clear this evening," he said. "Still there is a possibility that some one else in the train may have recognized him."

"There is a much greater possibility the other way," I rejoined. "But I am going to remove this matter out of the region of possibilities."

"How, may I ask?"

"By compelling you to tell the truth—a thing that I never hoped to see."

"Compel is a very forcible word. What is your backing for it?"

"Let me meet that question with another: Where were you when my uncle was murdered?"

Stalbridge smiled.

"I was enjoying the charm of your society—a pleasure that is too often denied me," he said.

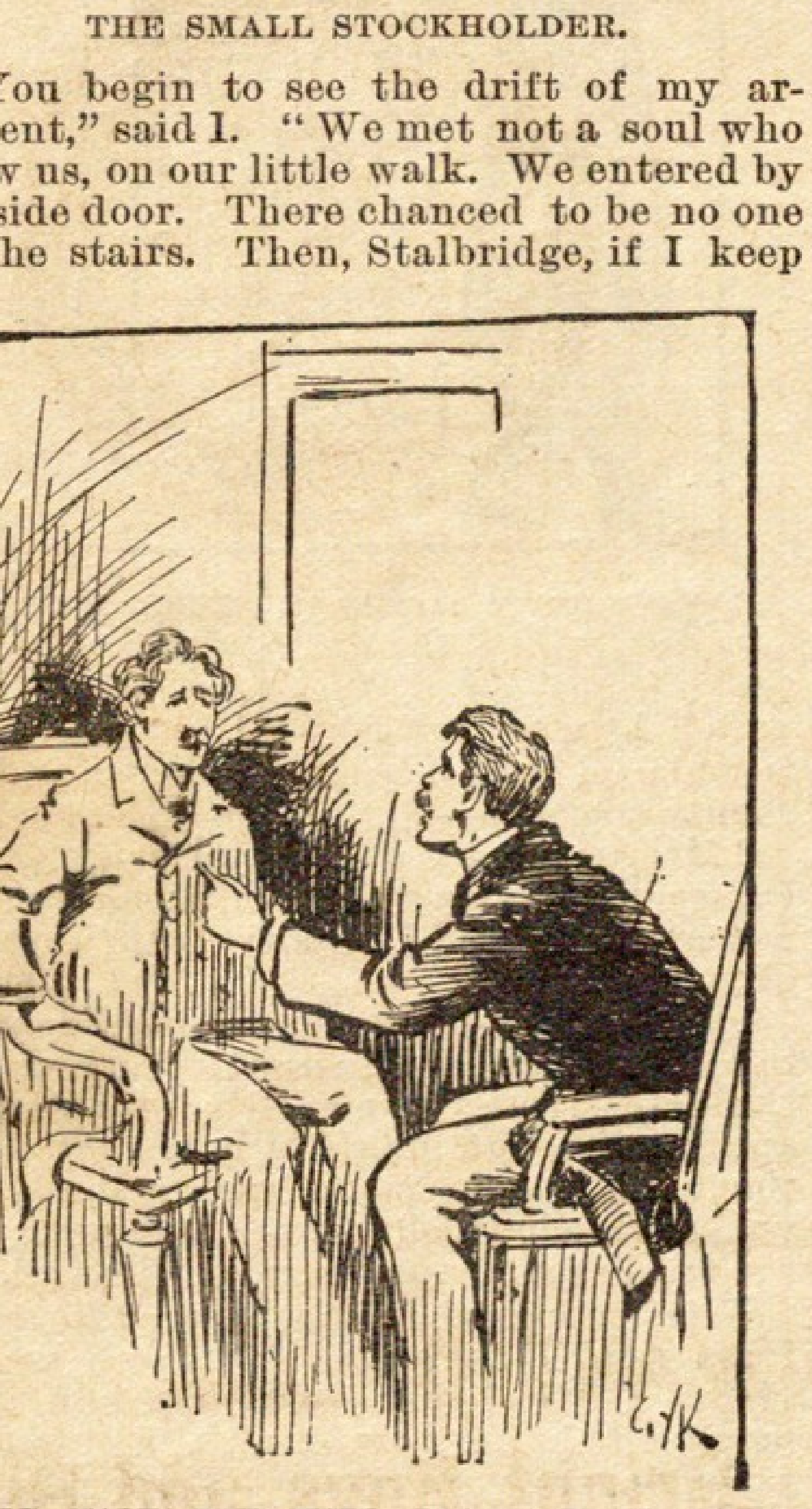
"How are you going to prove it?" I demanded.

My question struck him as if it had been a clenched fist. He started back. Then his brow darkened. He suddenly drew himself up and his lean hands became like claws. He was about to utter a threat, but somehow it seemed to stick in his throat.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SMALL STOCKHOLDER.

"You begin to see the drift of my argument," said I. "We met not a soul who knew us, on our little walk. We entered by the side door. There chanced to be no one on the stairs. Then, Stalbridge, if I keep my mouth shut, where is your *alibi?* If I denounce you; if I say that you were there by the door when I came, what would be your position? I have mentioned to no one that I had been with you before. And, by the eternal heavens, if you withhold your evidence in favor of Norman, I will keep back mine in your favor."



"I'LL MARK YOU WITH BLOOD FROM HEAD TO FOOT."

"You will not dare to do it?"

"Stalbridge, you don't believe that yourself. You know me too well. I have a backbone under my coat I'll stand by what I have said, and let me add another subject for your consideration: If there is going to be an evidence factory running in this case, as in so many others, I'll try to get into the business. You go ahead and make evidence against Norman. and I'll mark you with blood from head to foot."

At that moment Norman and the detective came out of the music room.

"Stalbridge," said Norman, "I have been persuaded that I have done you an injustice. This officer tells me that the suspicions against me were not instigated by you."

"I think that must be true," said I, shamelessly. "Mr. Stalbridge could not have permitted such a suspicion to gain headway, if he had known it, for he is perfectly well aware that you were not in the building when the deed was done."

"Thank God for that," returned Norman, devoutly. "It has been impossible for me to prove my whereabouts at that time. As a matter of fact, I was riding up town in the Sixth Avenue elevated railroad, but I met no one who knew me. I was aware that Mr. Stalbridge knew that I had left Mr. Davis's office nearly an hour before the crime, but I had no idea that he had seen me afterwards."

"He saw you on the train as it passed Vesey Street," said I. "That is the fact, I believe?"

I turned to Stalbridge.

"Yes," he said, in a surly tone. "I admit, however, that it did not then occur to me that your being in that place at that time constituted an *alibi.*"

"You did not mention having seen Mr. Norman in Mr. Davis's office this morning," said Johnson.

"I didn't see him," growled Stalbridge.

"Tell the truth," I muttered, passing behind him, "or you will know what I'll do."

"He was in the back room," said Norman. "Mr. Davis told me so, in a whisper, warning me that every word I said could be heard by him."

Stalbridge exchanged a glance with me. Then he said:

"It is true that I was there, though I did not wish the fact to be known—for business reasons, which, of course, can have no connection with this sad affair. I trust that all of you will regard what I say as confidential. I remained there, Mr. Norman, until after you left, and then I immediately went out. A few minutes later, while passing along Broadway, I saw Mr. Davis," indicating myself, "and followed him to the bank building."

"From which time," said I, fulfilling my agreement, "Mr. Stalbridge was with me every minute until I left the scene of the tragedy to come here."

"Well, the air is considerably clearer," remarked Detective Johnson. "I think we shall get along a good deal faster, now, on track of the criminal. Mr. Davis, about what time was it when you and Mr. Stalbridge met at the bank building?"

"About eleven o'clock; I don't know exactly," I replied.

"Were you near the main entrance?"

"Yes; we were in the hall."

"I suppose you didn't happen to see anybody in particular?" he said, in his dullest tone. "For instance, anybody who was afterward conspicuous on the scene of the crime?"

It flashed across my mind suddenly that I had seen the tall Italian enter the building—the same who had subsequently made some stir before the door of my uncle's office.

I mentioned the fact in response to Johnson's question, and, despite his stolidity, I saw that he was pleased.

"Who is the fellow?" I demanded.

"A small stockholder in the Twenty-seventh Street company," was the reply.

"Not Antonelli?" asked Norman, quickly.

"Antonio Antonelli," replied the detective, consulting a notebook. "I have his address here, and a few facts in his history. He's an interesting man."

It was the day following the murder, and Detective Johnson and I were alone together in the room where the crime had been committed. I had taken an extraordinary liking for the fellow. There was a frankness in his manner that was very refreshing, as a contrast to what I had expected to find, considering his proposition.

I was flattered, perhaps, by the way in which he had taken me into his confidence. There had been no evidence of a desire to be over-cautious, to make a virtue of secrecy regarding trifles. Whenever I asked a question of him, he answered promptly and without reserve. On the other hand, when he was in doubt, he had always asked my opinion and advice. I remembered in his favor that he had stated his theory of the crime openly and at once, instead of keeping it for a sensation to be exploited at the inquest, when all the reporters would be present with note-books and pencils.

My confidence in him was considerable, and yet I could not wholly subdue my impatience. Curiosity was strengthened by my sense of personal injury and my natural desire to see justice done upon a cowardly assassin.

"It seems strange that I did not suspect Antonelli in the first place," said I. "It was an Italian's weapon that was used, and I might have guessed by his conduct that he was one of the victims of the railway deal."

"His loss is less than a thousand dollars," replied Johnson; "but that makes no difference. It is the small loser who is the bitterest, my experience teaches me."

"Has he been arrested?" I asked.

Before he could reply, some one rapped upon the door. Johnson admitted a uniformed policeman, who merely said "all right," and then went out. It must have been an important message, for it worked a wondrous change in the detective. He at once dropped his frankness and candor and became the detective of romance. From this unfavorable transformation I argued that the message should have been "all wrong."

"What has happened?" I asked.

"You'll know presently," he said.

There was an interval of silence. Johnson was moodily stirring the contents of the wastepaper basket with his cane. The action reminded me of the torn document.

"Has Mrs. Johnson succeeded in patching that paper together?" I inquired.

"Mrs. Johnson?" he echoed, with an air of perplexity.

"Yes! You said you had given it to her."

"There isn't any Mrs. Johnson," said he. "I never was married."

"Then who has the fragments of that document?"

"They're in an envelope in my pocket," he replied, "and they've been there from the first. Nobody need have anxiety about them. All the men and women in the world couldn't patch them together in ten thousand years. But that doesn't make any difference. The document was a 'fake' anyhow."

"You mean that it was put there so that you might find it?"

"Precisely. I had already searched the unoccupied suite adjoining this one thoroughly, and the torn paper wasn't there. Then at Vice-President Rodney's suggestion, I searched again, and—"

"I thought it was Stalbridge who instituted that search. You said so."

"Did I?" asked the detective, innocently. "How could I have made such a mistake? As a matter of fact, it was the vice-president. But Stalbridge made the search with me. Of course we found the scraps."

"Then the murderer didn't tear that document?"

"I don't know whether he did or not."

"Confound it, Johnson, what's come over you? Instead of speaking right out as you used to do, you're trying to tangle the case all up."

"No, I'm not. I repeat that I don't know whether the murderer tore up that paper or not. Stalbridge might have done it."

"I think it quite probable. He was trying to hold up a case against Norman."

"Undoubtedly, and he wished me to believe that the bits of paper were the remains of the railway contract, but they weren't. That document was burned."

"Burned!"

"All but a little piece of it. Would you like to see it?"

He took from a card-case an irregular bit of paper about three inches long, and tapering from an inch in width to a point. It seemed to have been the lower left-hand corner of a sheet. The irregular upper edge was charred. The scraps had evidently been slightly wetted and it also appeared to have been stained with blood. There was a small, round hole through the middle of it.

"I found that in the escape pipe of the bowl," said Johnson, pointing toward the place where the murderer had washed his hands. "It had been rolled up and thrust into the pipe, but had caught in such a way as to escape being washed down. I examined the pipe on general principles, and found it. The few words that appear upon it are a sufficient identification. But what do you think of the hole? How was it made? What stained the paper red?"

A horrible thought suggested itself to me. I looked anxiously into Johnson's face. He nodded with a grim expression.

CHAPTER V.

A QUESTION OF TIME.

"This bit of paper was caught upon the weapon that pierced your uncle's heart," he said. "I have that weapon here."

"Not Norman's stiletto!" I cried, remembering that he had taken it.

"There was no stiletto in the case," he said. "The weapon was a peaceful one suddenly perverted to a deadly use. There it stands."

He indicated an ordinary spindle on which documents are spiked. It was simply a bit of steel wire about five inches long, mounted upon a metal standard, and sharply pointed at the end.

"It was all done in a moment of passion," said the detective. "Your uncle held that fatal contract in his hands. It was burning. The spectacle and your uncle's words at the moment must have maddened the murderer. He struck suddenly and surely with the first thing that came to his hand. Willard Davis fell mortally hurt. As he fell, his head struck the corner of his desk a violent blow. Thus, doubly wounded, he lay upon the floor. The murderer bent over him and slowly, fearfully, withdrew the weapon."

"Why did he do that?"

"Because that bit of paper was pinned down upon the victim's heart. The murderer dared not leave it there. He secured it at the cost of wetting his hands with blood. The paper was soaked. It would not burn. Distracted with fear, the murderer rolled the paper in his hands and thrust it down the escape pipe, where, fortunately for me, it lodged. Then the criminal washed his hands, dried them on that towel, and walked out of that door."

"What are you telling me?" I exclaimed. "This is all new. What has become of the theory which you explained to me with such care—my uncle struck down, the door locked with his keys, the paper taken, the fatal thrust given at last because the victim revived while Stalbridge and I were at the door."

"Up to the time when I was ten years old," replied Johnson. "I was a very truthful boy. Then I happened to notice that lying was not directly prohibited in the Commandments. Since then I have made it a point never to tell the truth unless there is a very pressing need of it. Thus I have risen in my profession—"

"But why was it necessary to lie to me?"

"Let me show you why," he said, earnestly; "and now you're going to get the exact facts. The great point of this case is that Mr. Davis lived nearly half an hour with a hole in his heart. There was where you went astray. You took my bogus medical report on top of the natural error of the ambulance surgeon, and believed that your uncle had been instantly killed. Wounds in the heart are popularly supposed to be immediately fatal, but that is not true. There are many cases—"

"I know all about them," I broke in, impatiently. "But you forget that when I entered the place I saw that door, leading to the rear room, close; and that it was locked when I reached it. The murderer was just escaping; my uncle was breathing his last. Then, by your measure of time, the assassin had remained with his victim nearly half an hour. Is that credible?"

"It is not," replied the detective. "But I can solve your difficulty. In the first place let me show you how I measured the time. It is rather pretty."

He led me to the bowl beneath the glass and called my attention to the fact that there was a small leak from the faucet. He asked me to observe the steadiness of it and then attempt to place the faucet in such a position that there would be a different rate of leakage. I found that the thing could not be done. The faucet worked by a law of its own, and wherever placed, it would spring at once to the position it seemed to prefer.

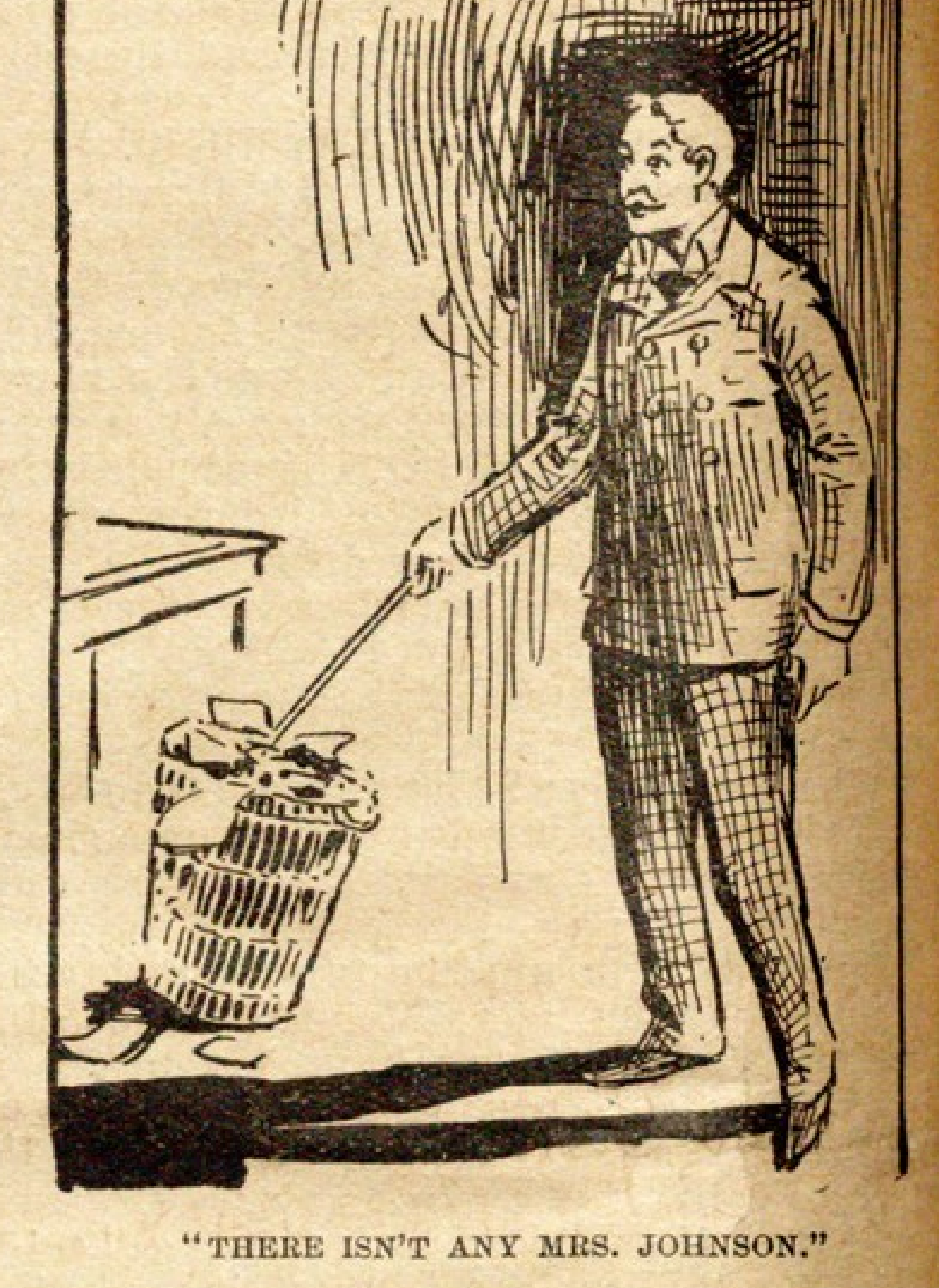
"Just after the crime," said Johnson, "when you and I bent over this bowl looking for bloodstains, I noticed that leak. Instantly I marked the level of the water in the bowl. Afterwards I experimented and found that the time required for the bowl to be filled to that point was fifty-one minutes. Take twenty-five minutes off for the time between the discovery of the crime—coincident with your uncle's death—and my marking of the bowl. That leaves twenty-six minutes. Now add four minutes for the time taken by the murderer in washing his hands. That makes just half an hour that your uncle lived."

"This is guess-work," said I. "How do you know that the murderer left no water in the bowl?"

"Because, my dear sir, the last thing he did was to push down this bit of paper, and he wouldn't have done that while there was water in the bowl. He didn't let any run afterwards, otherwise the paper would have been soaked. He pushed it in, supposing that it would fall down the pipe. Then he replaced the stopper—or it fell into place—and my timepiece was in operation.

"Now as to the closing of that door. Watch this little experiment. I open the door thus. Now will you oblige me by opening the main door suddenly. Thanks. You perceive the draught of air shuts this one. It fastens itself. I've replaced the lock you broke, and everything is as it was. So we've disposed of your delusion that you were right on the heels of the murderer."

I was considerably perplexed by this sudden change of theory. It was hard to escape the detective's reasoning in regard to the commission of the crime, yet there were several points that needed explanation. For instance, how could the door have been locked on the inside with my uncle's keys? I heard them drop out of the lock. Who had put them into it?



"THERE ISN'T ANY MRS. JOHNSON."

"It was Mr. Davis himself," said Johnson, when I put the question to him. "He was trying to get out. Doubtless he was feebly crying for help, but no one heard. Those marks of hands upon the door were his. The position shows that they were made by some one who was supporting himself with difficulty.

"He could not open the door, and for a very good reason. Dazed and dying, he had selected the wrong bunch of keys. I got the right one out of his pocket, and the key of that door was on it.

"And that's the great point of this case. That door was locked—not with Mr. Davis's key, for otherwise it would not have been in his pocket. There is but one other, and that belongs to—"

"Stalbridge!" I exclaimed.

"Correct, and beyond a doubt Stalbridge is the murderer."

"My instinct told me so, even when I believed absolutely that I knew him to be innocent."

"And now for the reason why I deceived you," continued the detective. "At first I acted on general principles. My theory propounded in this room was intended to deceive everybody. Afterward I acted for the sake of the effect upon Stalbridge. I did not know him to be guilty, but I strongly suspected him. I had heard of his stopping you and taking you for a walk. If he had anything to say, why didn't he bring you up here? Or take you into one of the rooms of

Save Stove Work
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Enameline
This should save you at least a week of your time in a year.
The brightest gloss at least labor.
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the Union Lines? It was fair to guess that he wanted to keep you out of the way.

"At last you forced him back to the scene of his crime. What must have been his surprise and horror at finding that his victim still lived! But soon he saw that it was to be his own salvation.

"The closing door, the wound in the heart—everything seemed to indicate that the crime was but just done. Then he could prove an *alibi* through you.

"Instantly the desire to convict Norman seized upon him. He was Norman's rival for Miss Davis's hand, and had worked in that cause as well as for money in getting your uncle into his power. It was in my favor that he should plot to convict Norman, for he was more likely to be led into an indiscretion. And the surest way to keep him at it was to satisfy himself of his own safety—to make him over-confident. For that reason I worked upon you. He would not have believed me, but he put faith in what came to him through you. He knew you to be his bitter enemy, and nothing could sustain him so much as your confidence in his innocence.

"Meanwhile I had Norman more or less under suspicion. I knew that he had been here, though I was not aware that Stalbridge was present at the same time. You forced that out of Stalbridge and also the very valuable and singular *alibi* for Norman."

"How about the Italian?"

"He was saved by my water-clock. He could account for himself up to the time when he entered this building, and that time was absolutely known. It was three minutes before eleven. The crime was committed five minutes earlier. Judge, then, of my satisfaction when you remembered seeing Antonelli. Stalbridge was with you at that time. He had just appeared. He had time to leave the scene of the crime, to leave the building by the side door, to see you approaching, and to stop you in order that you might not find the body.

"To Stalbridge, then, all clues lead. He will be here presently, and you shall see how he faces the accusation."

"Is he under arrest?"

"No; but he is shadowed. He will be arrested if he does not keep the appointment which he has with me here. He is overdue."

Johnson glanced at his watch and then stepped to the door. I saw him start. His face suddenly flushed.

"Come here!" he cried.

A slender young man, in rather shabby dress, stepped quickly to the door.

"Where's Stalbridge?" he gasped, as he glanced into the room.

"He hasn't been here," returned Johnson. "By Heavens, Mack, you've lost him!"

"Not on your life. I shadowed him to this room."

"He did not come in. The man has escaped. He got onto you and took the alarm."

Mack, the shadow, struck his forehead with his right hand.

"Is it possible that he got in there?" he said, and then he pointed to the door of the vacant suite. "If he did, he hasn't had any chance to get out."

Johnson and I rushed into the rooms. They were empty. The window opening into the shaft was open.

"By all the saints!" exclaimed the detective. "The fellow has climbed into the back room and has heard all I have said."

We ran back and passed into the rear room, leaving the shadow on guard in the hall. Stalbridge was not there, but we were not long in finding evidence of his presence. On the wall beside the door some words were scrawled in pencil. They had evidently been written while the murderer stood there listening:

"Thank you for these disclosures, Mr. Johnson. Your views are surprisingly accurate. I would like to remain and point out some of your errors, but time presses, and certain considerations urge my immediate departure. I fear we shall not meet again, as it is improbable that I shall ever return to New York. If it were not for the distressing noise of firearms, I would open this door and shoot you both where you sit."

These words had caught Johnson's eye on his first glance around the little room, He read them aloud. I meanwhile hastened to the window.

"The infernal rascal has got away," said the detective, "but he will be caught. It may be a long chase, though, for he will take a barrel of money with him."

As he spoke I measured with my eye the distance between the two windows. It was a hazardous feat to pass from one to the other. I glanced into the shaft to measure the distance one would fall.

I looked straight down into George Stalbridge's face. He had fallen in passing from one window to the other, and he lay in the bottom of the shaft, mortally hurt.

His fall had been heard, though not by us. Before we could get down the stairs he had been taken out of the shaft. He lived about half an hour, and was conscious most of the time.

Knowing that he was fatally injured, he had no hesitation in speaking of the crime. His story coincided perfectly with Johnson's theory. Willard Davis had yielded to Norman's pleas for fairer treatment in the railway transaction. Stalbridge, in the back room, had heard all.

When Norman had gone Stalbridge entered, and there was a brief and angry discussion, which ended in my uncle's touching a match to the railway contract. As it blazed up, so Stalbridge's anger blazed. The fatal blow came speedily. All else the reader knows.

THE END.

A REMARKABLE CLOUD-BURST.

In July, 1872, a tornado swept over the Coosa Mountain, producing some very remarkable effects. On the southerly side there are great gashes cut in the ground, and rocks of enormous size were swept from the mountain side. One piece of rock, which it is estimated weighs a hundred tons, was carried for half a mile down the mountain side. On the northwest side of the mountain there is a washout four or five feet deep in places and over sixty feet in width. This extends for a long distance. So fierce was the tornado, and such an astonishing amount of water fell, that large trees, great masses of rock and earth were swept down and piled together in an enormous heap at the foot of the mountain, and spread out over the level ground.

◆

—Some one once said of Richard Vaux, of Philadelphia, that he lived to prove by his own experience the needlessness of an overcoat or an umbrella. This lends a sad interest to the fact that he caught the cold that caused his death by going out on a raw, cold day without an overcoat. The utility of the overcoat is thus vindicated by the sacrifice of a brilliant man's life.

◆

—Dobbins' Floating-Borax Soap is not an imitation. It is original. The only soap that floats contains Borax and is 100 per cent. pure. It is worthy a trial. Every lady who tries it continues its use. Red wrapper. —*a.*

◆

CHARACTER.

Among the happiest and proudest possessions of a man is his character. The wise man does not despise the opinion of the world; he estimates it at its full value; he does not rush, from vanity alone, against the received opinions of others; he does not hazard his costly jewel with unworthy combatants, and for a petty stake. What is the essence and life of character? Principle, integrity, independence, or, as one ancient writer has it, "that inbred loyalty unto virtue which can serve her without a livery." These are qualities which hang not upon a man's breath. They must be formed within ourselves.

◆

FREE TO BALD HEADS.

The Altenheim Medical Dispensary, Room 103, Selves Building, Cincinnati, Ohio, will mail on application free information regarding how to grow hair, stop falling hair and remove scalp diseases. Send at once. —*a.*

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—Send 10 cents to-day to Swanson Cure Co., 167 Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill., for *free* sample of the wonderful 5 *Drop* remedy. See page 19 of last week's issue of the *Ledger*. —*a.*

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—It will cost about two hundred thousand dollars to put the Parthenon, the Temple of Theseus, and the other monuments in Athens damaged by last year's earthquake in a safe condition. An appeal for help will be sent out to all countries.

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DO NOT FAIL

To send 5c. to the Beeman Chemical Co., 113 Lake St., Cleveland, Ohio, for sample package Pepsin Chewing Gum, a splendid remedy for indigestion. —*a.*

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We are just in receipt of the 1896 issue of Dauchy & Company's Newspaper Catalogue. This work is issued annually and has become so familiar to advertisers, newspaper publishers, and others who are interested in the periodical publications of the country that it hardly needs extended notice from us. It is no faint praise to say that this edition is fully up to those of previous years. The book is a large volume of 710 pages, well bound in cloth, carefully printed from large and clear type, and on heavy paper; so that, mechanically, nothing better could be desired. The statistics are very conveniently arranged, and the peculiar feature of a ruled space for memoranda against each paper makes this catalogue the most useful one published. Advertisers and others who have occasion to use a newspaper directory regularly, know how necessary it is to make memoranda as to contracts, changes, etc., against the names of the papers, and this is the only work in which a space is provided for this purpose. This Newspaper Catalogue is a credit to its publishers, Messrs. Dauchy & Co., 27 Park Place, New York, from whom it can be obtained. —*a.*

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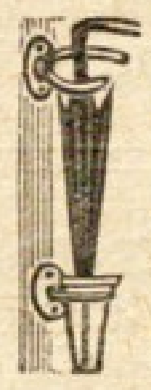

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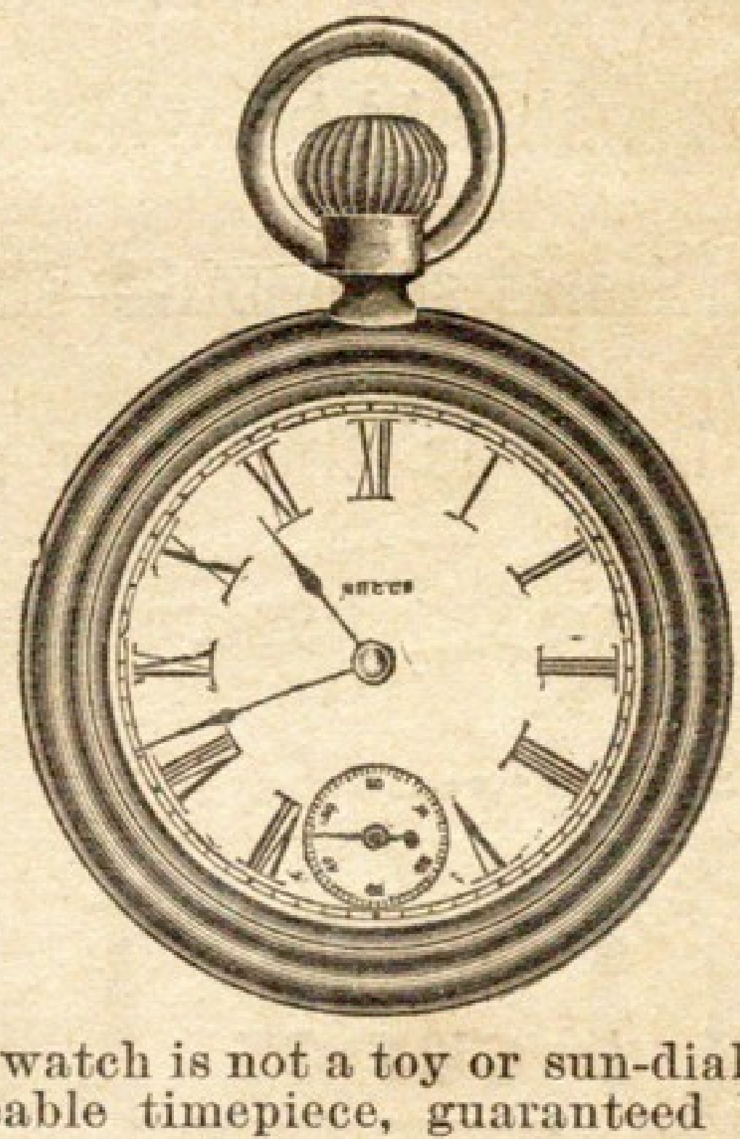

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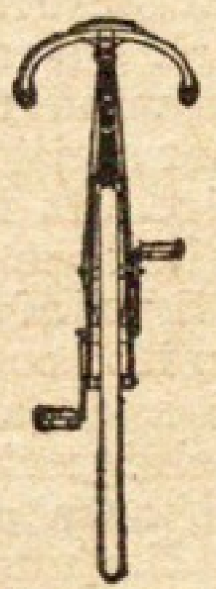

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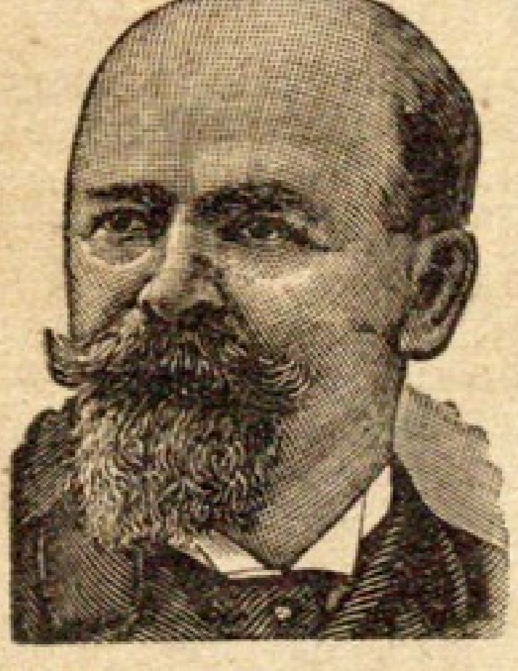

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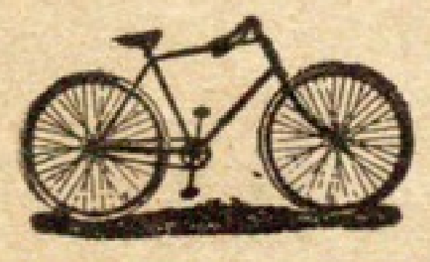

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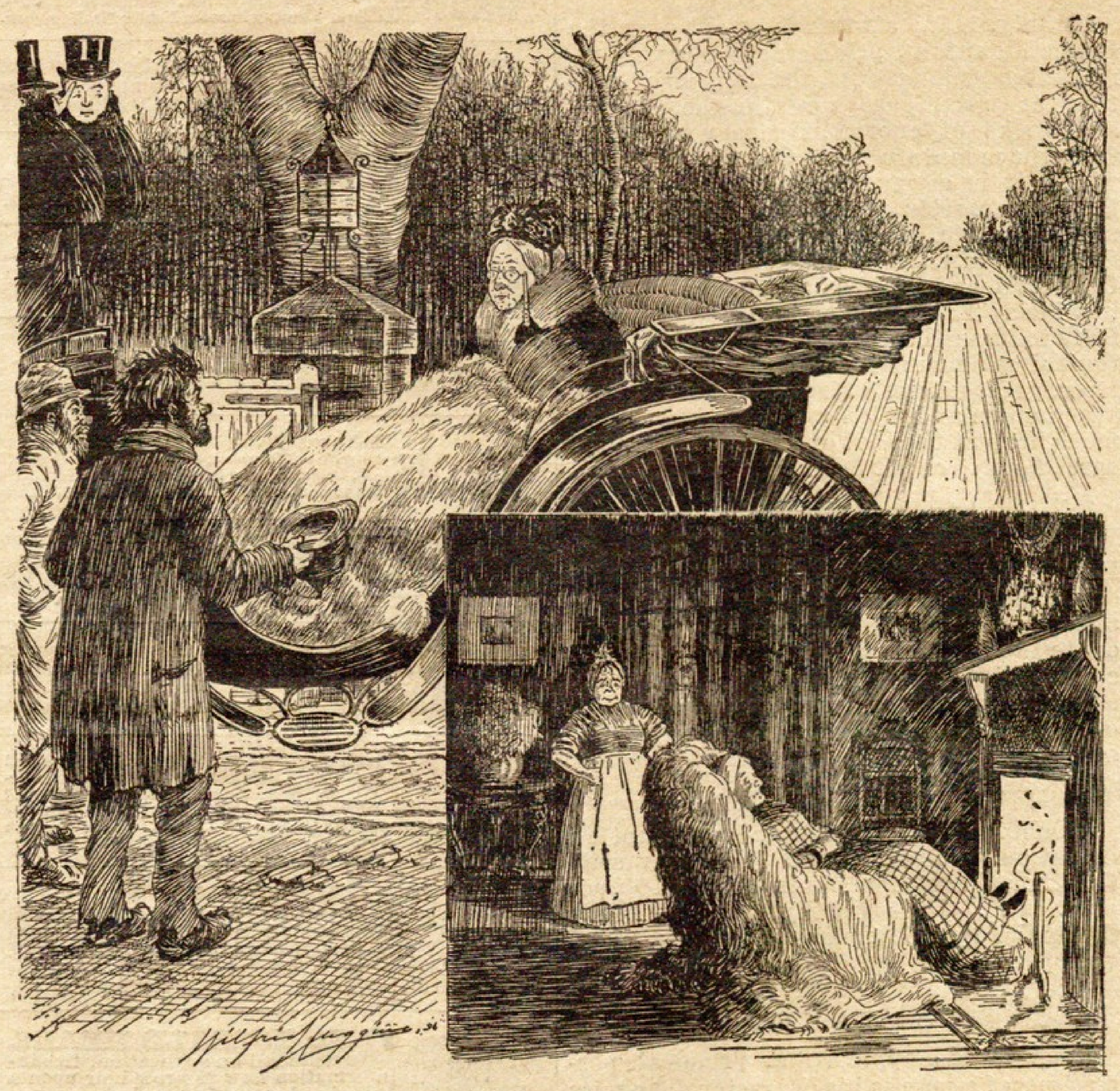

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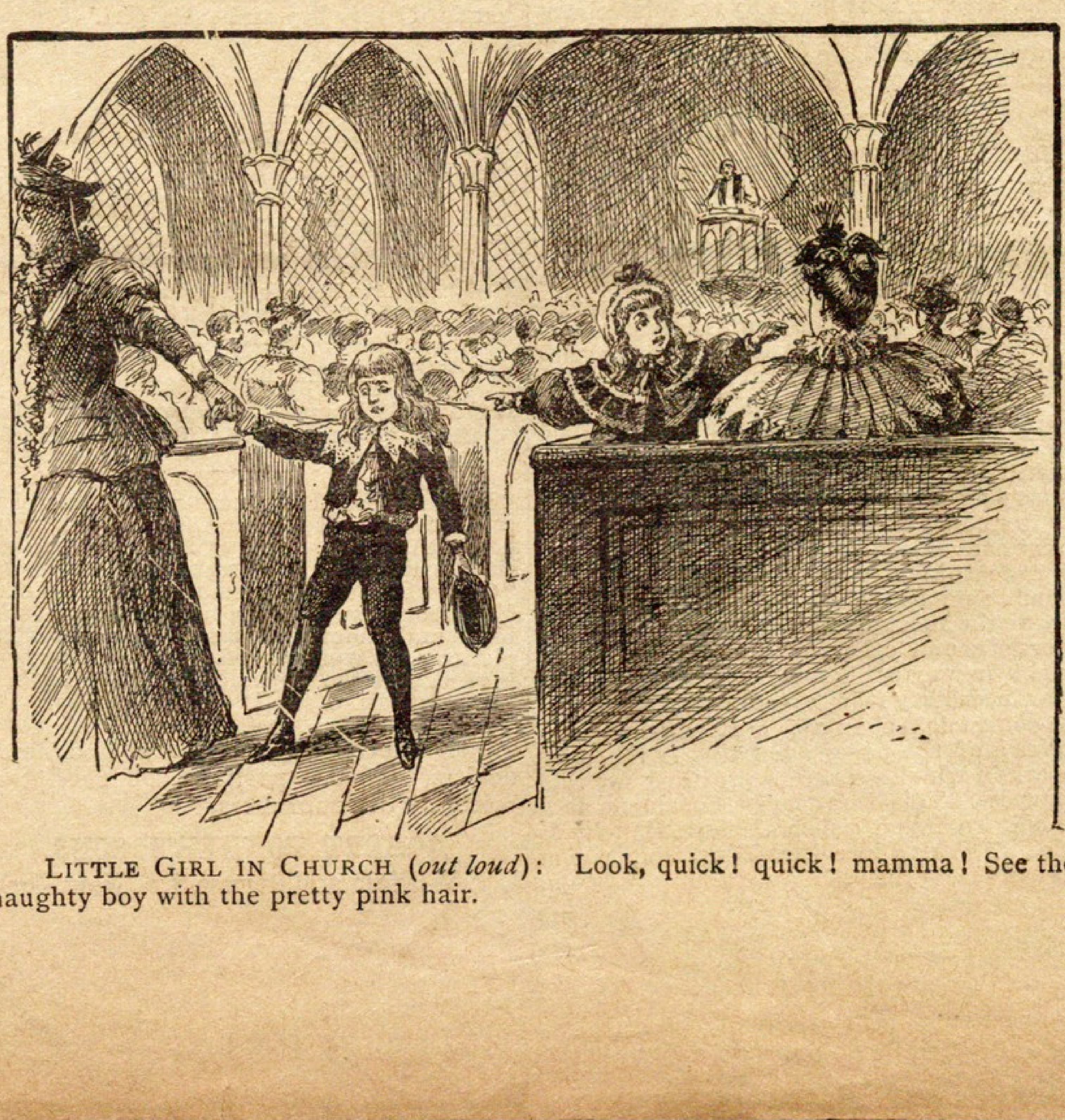

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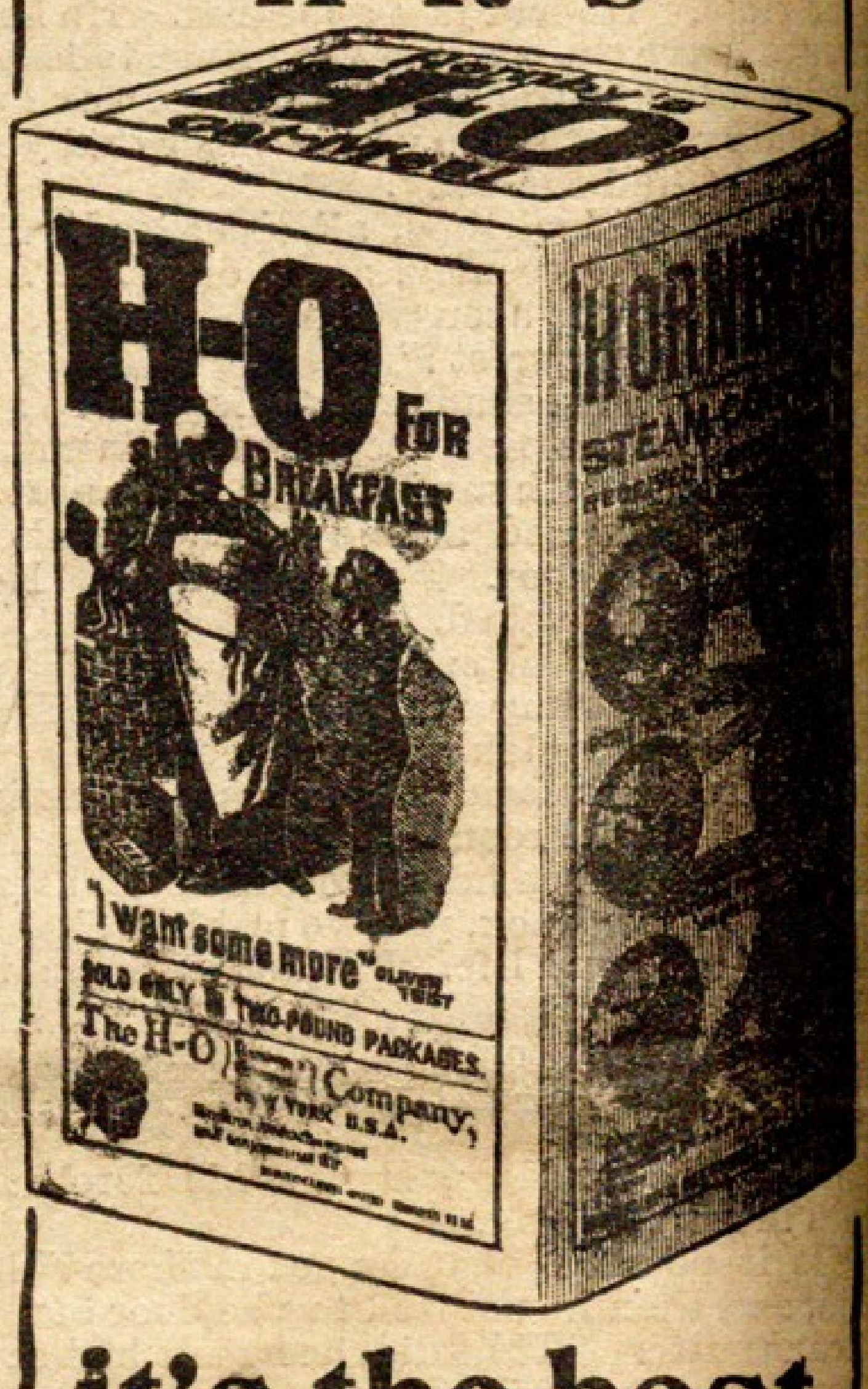

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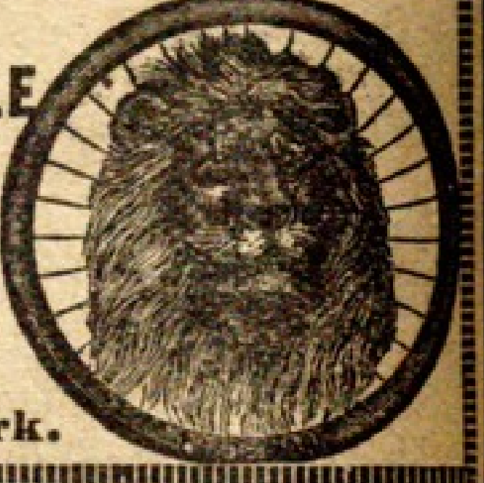

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